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ABSTRACT

Results of a survey of students of the University of Dublin concerning their language learning experiences and attitudes are reported. The study was undertaken within a larger study of self-directed language learning. The questionnaire had seven sections. The first and largest covered these topics related to students' language background: (1) the languages they knew, (2) their reading and writing habits in those languages, (3) the languages they had learned in educational institutions, (4) the instructional methods and materials they had experienced, (5) their success in language examinations, (6) visits made to second or foreign language communities, (7) their assessment of their competence in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), (8) the productive difficulties experienced, and (9) information about the languages they knew but would like to know better and those they did not know but would like to know. The six other sections covered the students' general attitudes toward foreign languages and cultures, foreign language needs, approaches to learning a foreign language they needed, opportunities to learn languages, individual characteristics (age, sex, parents' occupation, and so on), and responses to the questionnaire's design. Tables of survey data and analyses are presented within the narrative of results. The survey instrument is appended. (MSE)

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LEARNING SECOND LANGUAGES IN IRELAND: EXPERIENCE, ATTITUDES AND NEEDS

A report on surveys of the student population of Trinity College, Dublin, with supplementary data on students from other third-level educational institutions in the Republic of Ireland

FL014456

D. G. Little
D. M. Singleton
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D. G. Little   D. M. Singleton   W. F. M. Silvius

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Introduction

0.1 Background

The investigation described in this report is part of a larger project in self-instructional language learning that was launched by the Centre for Language and Communication Studies at the beginning of 1980. There are two reasons for the Centre's interest in self-instructional language learning. The first reason is economic/practical. Potentially the members of an institution like Trinity College could between them require access to an almost unlimited number of foreign languages, and it is unrealistic to suppose that every foreign language need can be met by providing a teacher and a conventional classroom course. Even if the necessary funds were available, there are many languages for which it would be impossible to supply teachers on a regular basis. The second reason is pedagogical/methodological. Adults who are seeking to meet a need for a foreign language are likely to have a precise and individual set of reasons underlying their need. This means that the learning process, if it is to meet the need, demands a high degree of individualization. Both economic/practical and methodological considerations point in the direction of self-instructional learning.

Language learning needs tend to be of two kinds: those that arise from the practical demands imposed on the individual by the situation in which he finds himself, and those which have their source in the individual's social, intellectual or emotional aspirations. Arguably a course of second/foreign language learning is most likely to be embarked upon and brought to a more or less satisfactory conclusion when both kinds of need are present. The individual's capacity to feel and respond to both kinds of need is determined by a variety of factors, for example: his social, economic and linguistic background; his previous experience of language learning; his precise perception of the reasons underlying his need and the way this is related to the preceding factors. And his ability to bring a course of learning to a successful conclusion will depend at least partly on the degree to which the expectations he brings with him to the learning task are fulfilled by the learning materials he is provided with.

0.2 Design of the survey

We based our research project on the methodological conviction that self-instructional language learning was the most appropriate way of meeting many second/foreign language needs in the university. Self-instructional learning allows for individualization both in the approach to learning and in the learning materials, and places a high premium on learner autonomy. Nevertheless it is clear that members of a university will have many features in common. Most of them share a common linguistic background, are drawn from the same rather narrow band of society, have been through the same educational system, have been taught to learn in the same way, and in the process have acquired similar cultural values and similar attitudes to second/foreign languages and language learning. This means that the requirements of individual learners, however different they may seem to be on the surface, are likely to be founded on a common stock of experience and attitudes. For this reason it seemed important to attempt as far as possible to delineate common experience and attitudes by conducting a survey by questionnaire of the student population of the university.

The questionnaire was designed in seven sections. The first (and longest) section sought to elicit information about subjects' language background as follows:

(i) the languages they knew;

(ii) their reading and writing habits in those languages (no questions were asked about listening and speaking habits because the oral use of language is much more difficult to describe in terms of habitual behaviour);

(iii) the languages they had learned in educational institutions;

(iv) the instructional methods and materials they had experienced (clearly their own perceptions of the learning experience may not reflect the intended bias of the methods and materials they were exposed to);

(v) their success in language examinations;

(vi) visits they had made to second/foreign language communities;

(vii) their assessment of their competence in the four language skills - understanding speech, speaking, reading and writing - in each of the languages they knew (such an assessment may say more about confidence than competence, but confidence is an essential prerequisite for successful use of second/foreign languages);

(viii) the productive difficulties they experienced in each of the languages they knew - their perceptions in this area may reflect, to some degree at least, the bias of the teaching they had been exposed to (no questions were asked about receptive difficulties on the ground that such difficulties are much less accessible to investigation by means of a general questionnaire);

(ix) information about languages (a) that they knew but said they would like to know better and (b) that they did not know but said they would like to know.

The second section of the questionnaire sought to elicit information about subjects' general attitudes to second/foreign languages and cultures. The third section focussed on second/foreign language needs, the fourth section on how subjects would set about learning a second/foreign language they needed, and the fifth section on the opportunities that subjects had to learn second/foreign languages. The sixth section sought information about subjects in terms of age, sex, parents' occupation, etc., and the seventh section sought responses to the design of the questionnaire itself.

A first draft of the questionnaire was sent to randomly selected members of the academic staff of Trinity College, whose replies were used to help determine its further elaboration. The full questionnaire was tested in a pilot survey of a small group of students at University College, Dublin. The final version of the questionnaire is printed in full as Appendix B of this report.

0.3 Administration of the questionnaire

Financial considerations and the time-scale envisaged for the collection of data caused us to opt for postal administration of the questionnaire. The literature stressed the high non-response rates that usually characterized this kind of survey. In an attempt to minimize non-response rates a stamped/ addressed envelope was enclosed with the questionnaire and two follow-up letters were sent to all subjects, the first a fortnight after the questionnaire was sent out and the second a fortnight later still.

At first we intended sending the questionnaire to a random sample of all students in Trinity College (N=400), but due to an administrative error the questionnaire was sent to a random sample of graduate students only, early in Trinity term 1980. This necessitated a second phase of the survey, and the questionnaire was sent to a random sample of the undergraduate population of Trinity College (N=400) early in Michaelmas term 1980. In retrospect the administrative error was a happy one, for it quickly emerged that in some areas at least there were important differences between undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) subjects which a single sample might not have revealed so clearly.

The response of the PG sample was 207 (slightly over 50%), and the response of the UG sample was 240 (60%). Tables I and II show the distribution of PG and UG respondents by sex and faculty. In both cases the non-response rate caused a loss of randomization. We are nonetheless satisfied that our data represent a sufficiently broad coverage of the UG and PG populations of Trinity College to enable us to come to some tentative descriptions regarding language learning experience and to form some general hypotheses regarding language needs. Table III shows the age distribution of the two samples. More than 80% of

UG subjects were aged between 18 and 21 years, while very nearly 75% of PG subjects were aged between 22 and 35 years.

TABLE I Division by sex and faculty of (a) all PG students in Trinity College at the time of the survey and (b) PG sample

	All PG (845)	PG sample (207)
Male	61.1%	54.9%
Female	38.7%	41.3%
No response	---	3.8%
Arts (Humanities)	44.7%	24.2%
Arts (Letters)	7.8%	19.3%
Economic and Social Studies	11.4%	8.7%
Maths/Engineering	9.9%	15.0%
Science	18.5%	27.1%
Medicine/Dentistry	7.7%	2.4%
No response	---	3.4%

TABLE II Division by sex and faculty of (a) all UG students in Trinity College at the time of the survey and (b) UG sample

	All UG (4837)	UG sample (240)
Male	52.7%	51.9%
Female	47.3%	48.1%
Arts (Humanities)	18.4%	15.4%
Arts (Letters)	3.3%	2.0%
Economic and Social Studies	15.2%	15.4%
Two-subject Moderatorship	18.6%	17.9%
General Studies	1.9%	4.2%
Maths/Engineering	12.3%	13.3%
Science	16.4%	17.1%
Medicine/Dentistry	14.0%	8.8%
No response	---	5.8%

TABLE III Age distribution of UG and PG samples

	UG (240)	PG (207)
18-21	80.4%	2.9%
22-25	12.1%	37.7%
26-30	3.3%	22.7%
31-35	1.7%	14.5%
36-40	0.8%	10.6%
41-50	---	6.3%
51 and over	---	1.0%
No response	1.7%	4.4%

A third phase of the survey was undertaken in an attempt to check how representative the Trinity College data were of the Irish student population generally. In the event this aim was not fully achieved and the data collected in the third phase of the survey can only be treated as a preliminary exploration. In preparing for this phase we made a list of all third-level institutions in the Republic of Ireland and divided them into the following categories:

Universities;
National Institute for Higher Education;
Regional Technical Colleges;
Colleges and Institutes of Education;
Colleges of Art, Music, etc.;
Dublin Colleges of Technology;
Colleges of Catering;
Colleges of Commerce.

We decided to take a controlled sample of these institutions and to present respondents with questionnaires in person. In this way we hoped to avoid the high non-response rate that is unavoidable when a questionnaire is administered postally. Letters requesting co-operation were sent to the following institutions; those marked with an asterisk were eventually visited:

National College of Art and Design;
* College of Technology, Kevin Street, Dublin;
* St Patrick's College, Maynooth;
St Patrick's College, Drumcondra;
* Sion Hill College of Education (Froebel);
Royal Irish Academy of Music;
* College of Commerce, Rathmines;
* Regional Technical College, Waterford;
* University College, Cork;
* Regional Technical College, Tralee;
* University College, Galway;
* Regional Technical College, Galway;
* School for Hotel Management, Shannon;
* National Institute for Higher Education, Limerick;

* Regional Technical College, Athlone;
Regional Technical College, Dundalk;
Regional Technical College, Letterkenny.

Each institution interpreted our requirements in a different way and again we failed to achieve a randomized sample. Appendix A presents tables for the third phase of the survey corresponding to the main strands of data presented in the body of the report.

0.4 Structure of the report

The discursive part of this report focusses entirely on the data collected from the UG and PG samples in Trinity College and is divided into two parts. The first part deals with subjects' language learning experience up to the time of the survey. In several important features - especially language background and experience of language learning at school - the data presented here are likely to be typical not just of university students but of the population in general belonging to the age groups surveyed. Thus our descriptions and hypotheses should be of interest to all concerned with second/foreign language teaching and learning in Ireland. The second part of the report deals with subjects' attitudes to second/foreign languages and the prospect of language learning at the time of the survey; the data presented here are less likely to be typical of the population beyond third-level institutions than the data presented in the first part, but may nevertheless offer some insights which are relevant to the planning of language courses in an adult education context. Each part of the report begins with a general chapter, which is followed by chapters on the five second/foreign languages of the Irish school curriculum (Irish, French, German, Spanish, Italian) and a chapter on other languages that subjects mentioned. Although it was not possible to write up all the data elicited by the questionnaire, much of the information not presented in the report was used to verify aspects of the data that are presented. A brief conclusion seeks to draw together the different strands of our data and to arrive at tentative hypotheses relating to (i) general issues in language teaching/learning and (ii) specific issues in self-instructional language learning.

As far as we are aware no survey of exactly this kind has been conducted previously, so that part of our survey's function was to identify areas of language learning experience and issues in language teaching/learning which might reward further and more intensive research along these lines. Our interpretation of the data does not pretend to be exhaustive, but as far as possible we have presented data in such a way as to allow further and more detailed analysis.

Three terminological matters require clarification here. For the sake of simplicity "second language" is henceforth used throughout the report for "second/foreign language"; "learning" and "acquisition" are used interchangeably and without regard to current debates which contrast conscious learning with unconscious acquisition; and "post-primary" is used to denote all forms of second level education in the Republic of Ireland (where "secondary" refers to a particular kind of post-primary school).

Data are presented in percentages when the sub-group under discussion numbers more than 50 and in proportions when the sub-group numbers fewer than 50. In most tables which compare sub-groups numbering more than 50 with sub-groups numbering fewer than 50 data are presented in percentages. In every case percentages have been corrected to one decimal place and proportions to two decimal places. This means that all the percentages in a table do not necessarily add up to exactly 100.0 and all the proportions in a table do not necessarily add up to exactly 1.00. Moreover, in some tables the categories used are not mutually exclusive, which means that a column or horizontal line of data may add up to substantially more than 100.0% or substantially more than 1.00. Wherever practicable "no response" rates are given; in some cases these are large enough to cast doubt on the authenticity of an apparent trend.

In all, 48 languages occur in the data presented in the main body of the report and in Appendix A. For the sake of clarity and consistency languages are listed in all tables in the following order: English as the first language of the overwhelming majority of respondents; Irish as the first official language of the state; the four other living languages of the school curriculum in descending order of numerical prominence; classical languages of the school curriculum (although in some cases "Greek" includes the modern as well as the classical language - see preamble to Chapters 7 and 14); thereafter in groups according to broad categories of geographical distribution. "Creole" was mentioned by one subject; it seems likely that he/she was referring to one of the Caribbean creoles. The full list in order of presentation is as follows:

English
Irish
French
German
Spanish
Italian
Latin
Greek
Breton
Manx
Scots Gaelic
Welsh
Dutch
Portuguese
Danish
Finnish
Icelandic

Norwegian
Swedish
Lithuanian
Polish
Russian
Serbo-Croat
Arabic
Hebrew
Maltese
Turkish
Afrikaans
Dagaare
Efik
Hausa
Ibo
Kikamba
Memon
Swahili
Zulu
Bengali
Gujarati
Hindi
Kannada
Punjabi
Sanskrit
Tamil
Urdu
Bahasa Malaysia
Chinese
Japanese
"Creole"

An earlier account of our findings relative to Irish was published as "Learning Irish: experience and aspirations" in Teagasc na Gaeilge 3 (1982-3), pp.35-65.

Part I

Language learning experience

Chapter 1

Experience of learning Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian : an overview

This chapter deals comparatively with subjects' experience of learning Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. These five languages have in common that they are living languages, are for the great majority of our subjects second languages, and are included in the Irish school curriculum. Moreover, responses in relation to these languages account for the great bulk of our data.

Data on English have sometimes been included for general comparative/contrastive purposes in sections of the chapter concerned with broad aspects of the language learning experience. Such data do not, however, appear in sections which discuss certain details of language background or particular linguistic skills and difficulties. The reason for this is simply that the focus of the chapter, as of the whole report, is on second language learning, and that for all but a handful of our subjects English is their first language.

Language-specific treatments of subjects' experience of learning, respectively, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian are to be found in Chapters 2-6. A comparative treatment of subjects' experience of learning languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian is to be found in Chapter 7.

1.1 NUMBERS

Since all our subjects were studying at a largely English-speaking university, and since the questionnaire they completed was drafted in English, it is safe to assume that 100% of our sample knew some English. Percentages of subjects with a knowledge of Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1 Percentages of subjects reporting some knowledge of Irish, French, German, Spanish, Italian

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
Irish	83.8%	77.8%
French	92.1%	90.3%
German	35.8%	35.8%
Spanish	15.4%	19.8%
Italian	7.9%	15.5%

If one ranks the languages specified in Table 1 according to the percentages of subjects who claimed knowledge of them, the result for both UG and PG is the following ordering (where 1 = reported known by the highest number of subjects):

1. French
2. Irish
3. German
4. Spanish
5. Italian

It is perhaps a little surprising that Irish appears in second rather than first position. However, this is probably to be explained by the fact that a number of our subjects were educated outside Ireland (cf. 1.2.4). Otherwise the above ranking corresponds to the relative importance (in numerical terms) of each of the specified languages in the school curriculum.

1.2 CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITUATIONS IN WHICH CONTACT WITH IRISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH AND ITALIAN WAS ESTABLISHED

1.2.1 Home

It is abundantly clear that for only a small minority of subjects was there any connexion between their knowledge and use of Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian and their home environment. Very few subjects claimed to have acquired one of these languages as a first language (Tables 2 and 3).

TABLE 2 Percentages of subjects who reported Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian as their sole first language

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
Irish	0.4%	1.5%
French	---	1.0%
German	0.4%	1.0%
Spanish	---	---
Italian	---	---

TABLE 3 Percentages of subjects who reported having acquired English together with Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian as joint first languages

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
English + Irish	0.4%	1.0%
English + French	0.4%	---
English + German	0.4%	---
English + Spanish	---	1.0%
English + Italian	---	---

Furthermore, only tiny minorities of subjects claimed that the people with whom they were most intimately connected (their parents or - where applicable - their spouses/partners and children) had Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian as a first language (Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7), or that any of these languages was in current use in their household (Table 8).

TABLE 4 Percentages of subjects reporting that their mother had Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian as a first language

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
Irish	[illegible]	2.9%
French	[illegible]	1.0%
German	1.3%	1.0%
Spanish	---	0.5%
Italian	---	---

TABLE 5 Percentages of subjects reporting that their father had Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian as a first language

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
Irish	3.3%	3.4%
French	---	1.5%
German	0.8%	1.0%
Spanish	---	---
Italian	0.4%	---

TABLE 6 Percentages of subjects with spouse/partner reporting that their spouse/partner had Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian as a first language

	UG with spouse/ partner (67)	PG with spouse/ partner (86)
Irish	3.0%	---
French	1.5%	1.2%
German	1.5%	---
Spanish	1.5%	---
Italian	---	---

TABLE 7 Proportions of subjects with children reporting that their children had Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian as a first language

	UG with children (13)	PG with children (47)
Irish	0.15	0.11
French	---	0.02
German	---	---
Spanish	---	---
Italian	---	---

TABLE 8 Percentages of subjects living in households reporting that Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian was in current use in their household

	UG living in household (225)	PG living in household (172)
Irish	1.3%	23.3%
French	0.4%	0.6%
German	---	1.2%
Spanish	---	0.6%
Italian	---	---

The one figure in Table 8 which rises above the negligible is that for Irish among PG subjects. About 23% of PG subjects living in households claimed that some Irish was spoken in their household. Corroborative evidence for this finding is displayed in Table 9, which shows the percentages of subjects mentioning the home environment as a factor in learning Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Only in the case of Irish does this factor seem to be at all significant.

TABLE 9 Percentages of subjects mentioning home environment as a factor in learning Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
Irish	20.0%	15.5%
French	3.3%	2.4%
German	1.7%	1.5%
Spanish	---	1.0%
Italian	0.4%	---

The data presented in Tables 8 and 9, taken together with those presented in Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7, appear to indicate that for a small but not insignificant proportion of subjects Irish was in some sense and in some measure a language of the home despite the fact that no one in the household was actually a native speaker of the language.

1.2.2 Age

Table 10 shows the ages at which subjects started learning particular languages. The figures in this table reflect (a) the fact that the vast majority of our subjects were native speakers of English and therefore began learning English in their first three years of life; and (b) the fact that most of our subjects went through the Irish school system, where most pupils begin learning Irish in their primary school years (4-10) and French in their post-primary school years (11-17).

As far as German, Spanish and Italian are concerned, in our subjects' experience they seem hardly to feature at all before the age of eleven. Their showing in respect of the 11-17 age period reflects the fact that although they feature in the post-primary curriculum, these languages are taken by only a minority of pupils.

Not a single subject reported having started learning English or Irish after the normal school years - presumably because most subjects had begun learning these languages previously. The same kind of argument would explain the relatively low figures for French in the "After 17" column, especially among UG. Italian and German are revealed as having been very often taken up beyond the normal school years. As many UG and nearly three times as many PG reported having started Italian after 17 as reported having started it in the 11-17 period; and nearly as many PG and more than half as many UG subjects as reported having begun German in the 11-17 period reported having begun it after 17. Spanish seems less prominent in this regard (which may be related to the high non-response rate). Nevertheless, at least as far as PG subjects are concerned, Spanish was reported as having been taken after 17 by rather more than half as many subjects as reported having taken it up during the 11-17 period.

TABLE 10 Ages at which subjects started learning Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Percentages relate to total numbers of subjects who claimed a a knowledge of each language

UG

	Before 4	4-10	11-17	After 17	No response
English (240)	92.5%	5.8%	0.4%	---	1.3%
Irish (201)	4.5%	87.1%	1.5%	---	7.0%
French (221)	---	21.3%	69.7%	1.8%	7.2%
German (86)	4.7%	2.3%	44.2%	24.4%	24.4%
Spanish (37)	---	5.4%	43.2%	2.7%	48.7%
Italian (19)	---	5.3%	36.8%	36.8%	21.1%

PG

	Before 4	4-10	11-17	After 17	No response
English (207)	82.6%	8.7%	4.8%	---	3.9%
Irish (161)	9.9%	77.6%	3.1%	---	9.3%
French (187)	1.6%	13.4%	58.3%	6.4%	20.3%
German (74)	2.7%	---	35.1%	32.4%	29.7%
Spanish (41)	2.4%	---	36.6%	22.0%	39.0%
Italian (32)	---	---	21.9%	53.1%	25.0%

1.2.3 Speech community

The data on places where our subjects learned particular languages they knew (Table 11) can most easily be summarized if one divides the languages in question into two groups: those known by a majority of subjects (i.e. English, Irish and French) and the rest. In respect of the former group our subjects' learning experience appears more usually to have taken place exclusively in their own country, but occasionally to have occurred in a country/region where their target language was native as well as in their own country. It was apparently relatively rare for Irish or French to be learned exclusively in an environment where the language was native and it was also rare for any of the "major" languages to be learned elsewhere than in the subjects' own countries or in countries/regions where these languages are native.

TABLE 11 Where subjects learned English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Percentages relate to total numbers of subjects who claimed a knowledge of each language

	1	2	3	4	5	6
			UG			
English (240)	87.5%	1.3%	0.4%	6.7%	---	4.2%
Irish (201)	77.6%	0.5%	---	14.9%	0.5%	6.5%
French (221)	67.4%	4.5%	1.4%	18.1%	1.8%	6.8%
German (86)	39.5%	20.9%	1.2%	15.1%	---	23.3%
Spanish (37)	43.2%	8.1%	---	2.7%	---	46.0%
Italian (19)	36.8%	26.3%	5.3%	10.5%	5.3%	15.8%
			PG			
English (207)	77.3%	1.0%	1.5%	13.0%	1.5%	5.8%
Irish (161)	72.7%	1.2%	---	16.8%	0.6%	8.7%
French (187)	44.4%	1.6%	2.7%	26.7%	3.7%	20.9%
German (74)	39.2%	12.2%	2.7%	18.9%	1.4%	25.7%
Spanish (41)	22.0%	9.8%	2.4%	29.3%	4.9%	31.7%
Italian (32)	18.8%	25.0%	6.3%	28.1%	3.1%	18.8%

Key:
1 = In own country
2 = In country/region where language is native
3 = In other place
4 = In own country and in country/region where language is native
5 = Other combinations
6 = No response

As far as the other languages are concerned, most of the above trends do not necessarily apply. Thus a higher percentage of UG subjects reported that their experience of learning German took place exclusively in a German-speaking country than reported that this experience occurred partly in a German-speaking country and partly in their own country; a higher percentage of PG subjects reported having learned Spanish partly in a Spanish-speaking country than reported having learned it exclusively in their own country; a higher percentage of PG subjects reported having learned Italian either partly or exclusively in an Italian-speaking country than reported having learned it exclusively in their own country. The only entirely consistent trend with regard to this group was for places other than subjects' own countries or countries/regions where particular target languages are native to be rarely mentioned.

TABLE 12 Time spent by UG in countries/regions where Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian is native

(N=240)

	Irish	French	German	Spanish	Italian
One week or less	2.9%	7.1%	1.7%	1.7%	0.8%
1 week - 1 month	12.5%	19.2%	9.2%	10.4%	5.0%
1-3 months	11.3%	15.4%	13.3%	3.8%	1.7%
3-6 months	3.3%	6.3%	3.8%	1.3%	0.4%
6-9 months	0.4%	1.7%	---	---	---
9 months - 1 year	0.4%	0.8%	0.4%	0.4%	---
1-2 years	0.8%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
2-3 years	---	---	---	---	---
More than 3 years	0.8%	---	---	---	---

TABLE 13 Time spent by PG in countries/regions where Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian is native

(N=207)

	Irish	French	German	Spanish	Italian
One week or less	1.0%	4.4%	3.9%	4.8%	3.9%
1 week- 1 month	7.2%	20.3%	12.6%	10.1%	14.0%
1-3 months	9.7%	18.8%	5.8%	6.3%	4.8%
3-6 months	3.9%	5.8%	2.4%	2.9%	1.5%
6-9 months	1.0%	1.5%	3.9%	1.0%	0.5%
9 months- 1 year	0.5%	2.9%	1.5%	1.5%	---
1-2 years	1.0%	1.9%	1.0%	---	1.5%
2-3 years	---	1.0%	1.5%	---	---
Over 3 years	1.0%	0.5%	0.5%	---	1.0%

More generally, quite substantial percentages of subjects reported having spent some time in various countries/regions where Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian was native

(Tables 12 and 13). The typical amount of time spent in such a country/region seems to have been between one week and one month.

The communicative experience of subjects who reported having visited Irish-, French-, German-, Spanish- or Italian-speaking countries/regions is summed up in Tables 14-19. Only in the case of subjects who had visited Irish-speaking areas did a majority claim to have spoken only the language native to the country/region (although the figures for attempts to speak nothing but French in Francophone countries do not fall far short of 50%). In relation to the experience of being addressed only in the language native to the country/region visited, the figures are somewhat higher generally, though Irish and French still have the edge over the other languages. However, a clear majority of subjects who had visited such countries/regions reported having had only Irish, French, German or Italian respectively spoken in their company. If one adds in the figures for subjects who reported having used or been exposed to a mixture of their native language and the language of the country/region, one finds that Irish and French again (proportionally) lead the field, though less markedly so in respect of languages spoken in subjects' company.

This pattern causes no surprise. There must clearly be some relationship between whether or not one knows a language and whether or not one attempts to speak it. It is also true that the extent to which one is addressed in a particular language will depend in some measure on the impression one gives of one's ability to understand it. In other words, trying to speak a

TABLE 14 Language(s) spoken by UG when visiting Irish-, French-, German-, Spanish- and Italian-speaking countries/regions

	Irish (78)	French (122)	German (69)	Spanish (43)	Italian (20)
Own language	11.5%	13.9%	34.8%	39.5%	50.0%
Language of country/region	57.7%	45.1%	27.5%	18.6%	30.0%
Other language	---	---	---	2.3%	---
Own language + language of country/region	29.5%	37.7%	36.2%	20.9%	25.0%
Own language + other language	---	0.8%	1.5%	4.6%	---
Language of country/region + other language	---	1.6%	---	---	---
Own language + language of country/region + other language	---	2.5%	1.4%	---	5.0%

language and being addressed in a language must correlate at least in crude terms with one's knowledge of that language. It is not surprising, then, that the most widely known languages - Irish and French - receive the highest scores in respect of

TABLE 15 Language(s) spoken by PG when visiting Irish-, French-, German-, Spanish- and Italian-speaking countries/regions

	Irish (52)	French (118)	German (68)	Spanish (55)	Italian (56)
Own language	5.8%	13.6%	25.0%	32.7%	37.5%
Language of country/region	61.5%	48.3%	26.5%	21.8%	16.1%
Other language	---	0.9%	1.5%	3.6%	7.1%
Own language + language of country/region	30.8%	34.8%	26.5%	21.8%	21.4%
Own language + other language	---	0.9%	5.9%	5.5%	7.1%
Language of country/region + other language	---	1.7%	2.9%	1.8%	3.6%
Own language + language of country/region + other language	---	3.4%	4.4%	1.8%	5.4%

TABLE 16 Language(s) spoken to UG visiting Irish-, French-, German-, Spanish- and Italian-speaking countries/regions

	Irish (78)	French (122)	German (69)	Spanish (43)	Italian (20)
Own language	3.9%	7.4%	26.1%	27.9%	25.0%
Language of country/region	71.8%	58.2%	30.4%	30.2%	45.0%
Other language	---	0.8%	---	---	---
Own language + language of country/region	21.8%	30.3%	40.6%	23.3%	35.0%
Own language + other language	---	0.8%	---	2.3%	---
Language of country/region + other language	---	---	---	2.3%	---
Own language + language of country/region + other language	---	0.8%	4.4%	2.3%	5.0%

attempts at face-to-face communication. On the other hand, since the global linguistic environment is not usually under the control of any one speaker, it is equally unsurprising that the figures relating to the degree to which the languages of non-anglophone countries/ regions were used in subjects' company are generally high.

TABLE 17 Language(s) spoken to PG visiting Irish-, French-, German-, Spanish- and Italian-speaking countries/regions

	Irish (52)	French (118)	German (68)	Spanish (55)	Italian (56)
Own language	5.8%	6.8%	25.0%	27.3%	23.2%
Language of country/region	61.5%	54.2%	33.8%	27.3%	41.1%
Other language	---	---	---	1.8%	3.6%
Own language + language of country/region	26.9%	38.1%	26.5%	21.8%	14.3%
Own language + other language	---	0.9%	1.5%	3.6%	3.6%
Language of country/region + other language	---	0.9%	2.9%	1.8%	3.6%
Own language + language of country/region + other language	---	---	5.9%	---	5.4%

TABLE 18 Language(s) spoken in the company of UG visiting Irish-, French-, German-, Spanish- and Italian-speaking countries/regions

	Irish (76)	French (122)	German (69)	Spanish (43)	Italian (20)
Own language	1.3%	2.5%	5.8%	2.3%	10.0%
Language of country/region	83.3%	84.4%	76.8%	72.1%	70.0%
Other language	---	---	---	---	---
Own language + language of country/region	14.1%	13.1%	15.9%	9.3%	20.0%
Own language + other language	---	---	---	---	---
Language of country/region + other language	---	0.8%	---	---	---
Own language + language of country/region + other language	---	---	---	---	---

TABLE 19 Language(s) spoken in the company of PG visiting Irish-, French-, German-, Spanish- and Italian-speaking countries/regions

	Irish (52)	French (118)	German (68)	Spanish (55)	Italian (56)
Own language	1.9%	2.5%	10.3%	10.9%	3.6%
Language of country/region	71.2%	78.8%	61.8%	52.7%	76.8%
Other language	---	0.9%	1.5%	1.8%	---
Own language + language of country/region	21.2%	14.4%	13.2%	16.4%	10.7%
Own language + other language	---	---	---	---	---
Language of country/region + other language	---	---	4.4%	1.8%	3.6%
Own language + language of country/region + other language	---	0.8%	1.5%	---	1.8%

1.2.4 Factors in the learning experience

Tables 20 and 21 show the percentages of subjects who mentioned various factors as having played a role in their

TABLE 20 Percentages of UG subjects with a knowledge of English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian who mentioned various factors as having played a role in their experience of learning these languages

	English (240)	Irish (201)	French (221)	German (86)	Spanish (37)	Italian (19)
Home	94.2%	23.9%	3.6%	4.7%	---	5.3%
School	2.9%	72.1%	88.2%	45.4%	48.7%	42.1%
Friends/acquaintances	0.4%	13.4%	17.2%	15.1%	16.2%	26.3%
University/language course/study	0.4%	---	1.8%	10.5%	2.7%	15.8%
Visits/residence abroad	0.4%	14.9%	17.7%	20.9%	13.5%	21.1%
Books, films media, music	0.4%	22.9%	33.0%	23.3%	16.2%	26.3%

TABLE 21 Percentages of PG subjects with a knowledge of English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian who mentioned various factors as having played a role in their experience of learning these languages

	English (207)	Irish (161)	French (187)	German (74)	Spanish (41)	Italian (32)
Home	87.0%	19.9%	2.7%	4.1%	4.9%	---
School	9.2%	84.5%	72.7%	40.5%	36.6%	18.8%
Friends/acquaintances	2.9%	17.4%	18.2%	18.9%	24.4%	31.3%
University/language course/study	2.9%	8.1%	25.1%	36.5%	24.4%	43.8%
Visits/residence abroad	1.5%	10.6%	23.5%	21.6%	22.0%	37.5%
Books, films, media, music	27.5%	23.0%	23.0%	18.9%	29.3%	25.0%

TABLE 22 Numbers of references subjects made to personal contacts and formal educational/cultural factors in their experience of learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

		UG	PG
ENGLISH	Personal contacts	228	189
	Formal educational/cultural factors	9	82
IRISH	Personal contacts	105	77
	Formal educational/cultural factors	191	186
FRENCH	Personal contacts	85	83
	Formal educational/cultural factors	272	226
GERMAN	Personal contacts	35	33
	Formal educational/cultural factors	68	71
SPANISH	Personal contacts	11	21
	Formal educational/cultural factors	25	37
ITALIAN	Personal contacts	10	22
	Formal educational/cultural factors	16	28

experience of learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Table 22 restates the same information using just two categories - "personal contacts" (a conflation of "home", "friends/acquaintances" and "visits/residence abroad") and "formal educational/cultural factors" (a conflation of "school", "university/language course" and "books, films, media, music").

It is interesting to note which of these sets of factors appears to have predominated - and to what extent - in our subjects' experience of learning individual languages. Since English is the mother tongue of most of our subjects it is natural enough that "personal contacts" should in this case have been mentioned markedly more frequently than "formal educational/cultural factors". Conversely, it is unremarkable that this latter category should have shown a predominance in relation to languages which are not native to most subjects and which figure in the school curriculum (i.e. Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian).

One notes that this last-mentioned predominance is distinctly more pronounced in the case of French. It is not difficult to find a plausible explanation for this state of affairs. French is taken routinely by the majority of second-level pupils, most of whom are unlikely to have ready opportunities for extra-mural contact with French-speakers or the motivation to create such opportunities. Irish is also taken routinely by most pupils, but in this case opportunities to interact with speakers of the language (native and other) are somewhat easier to come by. As for the "minority" languages - German, Spanish and Italian - there may be an element of choice, and therefore personal interest, in many subjects' experience of learning these languages. Thus, amongst learners of these languages one would expect motivation actively to seek encounters, for example, with native speakers (whether in Ireland or abroad) to be generally higher.

This last point is especially relevant in the case of German and Italian. A fair number of subjects started learning German and/or Italian relatively late - i.e. after the age of seventeen (see Table 10) - to do which would presumably be very largely if not entirely a matter of personal choice.

As far as factors other than personal contacts are concerned, it is evident from Tables 20 and 21 that the elements which loom largest for Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian have to do with language learning in a formal sense - i.e. at school, at university or in the context of other courses involving some kind and degree of structuring and pre-planning. It should be noted that a comparison of the number of references to school in these data with the numbers of subjects reporting having taken these languages at primary and post-primary school (see Tables 23 and 24 and information in 2.2.4, 3.2.4, 4.2.4, 5.2.4 and 6.2.4) indicates that many subjects who had in fact taken a particular language at school neglected to include school in their itemization of factors in their experience of learning that language. In relation to Irish, French, German and Spanish, school was nevertheless mentioned more often than any other single factor. In the case of Italian, the category "university/language course" was referred to more often than any other. This category was also referred to second most often in respect of French and German. (In most cases the language courses other than university courses specified in connexion with this category were taught rather than self-instructional.)

The only language other than English which a majority of our respondents reported having taken at primary school is Irish (Table 23) - which is precisely what one would expect, given the fact that most of our subjects went through the Irish school system (cf. 1.2.2). However, it is noteworthy that a sizeable minority of both UG and PG subjects claimed to have taken French at this level, proportionally more UG than PG making the claim. This seems to suggest that there is a continuing and perhaps increasing trend towards the introduction of French at primary level (cf. Table 10).

TABLE 23 Percentages of subjects who reported having taken English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at primary school

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
English	97.5%	91.3%
Irish	81.3%	75.4%
French	23.3%	18.4%
German	1.7%	1.0%
Spanish	1.7%	1.5%
Italian	---	---

Both Irish and French were reported as having been taken at post-primary school by a large majority of subjects (Table 24). The fact that the numbers for French in this context outstrip those for Irish probably relates to subjects' place of education. Some subjects received their second-level education in countries like Britain and the United States, where French but not Irish is on the school curriculum (cf. 1.1). One notices that in the case of each of these languages more UG than PG reported having taken it as a subject at post-primary level. As far as Irish is concerned this may reflect the make-up of the two samples in terms of Irish-educated versus foreign-educated subjects. With regard to French, on the other hand, this variation is probably at least partly bound up with the fact that increasing proportions of Irish pupils have been taking French at second level in recent years.

Of the "minority" languages German was most often reported as having been taken as a subject at second level. This accords with evidence from the official statistics on second-level subject popularity, as does the indication in the difference between the UG and PG figures that the position of German in post-primary schools was strengthening somewhat in the 1970s. The relative positions of Spanish and Italian in Table 24 also correspond to their ordering in the official statistics showing the numbers of pupils taking the different languages at post-primary level.

TABLE 24 Percentages of subjects who reported having taken English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at post-primary school

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
English	100.0%	87.4%
Irish	82.5%	74.4%
French	91.3%	80.2%
German	21.7%	15.5%
Spanish	11.7%	12.6%
Italian	2.1%	1.9%

22.5% of UG (54/240) and 37.7% of PG subjects (78/207) reported that they had studied or were studying one or more languages at degree course level. These relatively high percentages are an indication of the loss of randomization referred to in the introduction.

Table 25 shows the percentages of subjects who reported having taken English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at degree course level. As far as the PG data are concerned the ranking of Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian according to percentages of subjects who took these languages at this level corresponds to their ranking (a) according to overall numbers of subjects who claimed to know them (Table 1) and (b) according to numbers of subjects who reported having taken them at post-primary school (Table 24). The UG data presented in Table 25 do not correlate quite so neatly with other data, insofar as more UG subjects reported that they had studied Irish at college/university than reported that they had studied French. Moreover, UG subjects referred to German, Spanish and Italian in this context in equal numbers. However, there is a gross correspondence to the extent that, as one would expect, here as elsewhere higher figures are associated with Irish and French than with German, Spanish and Italian.

TABLE 25 Percentages of subjects who reported having taken English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at degree course level

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
English	11.7%	21.7%
Irish	10.4%	9.2%
French	6.7%	19.3%
German	2.5%	5.3%
Spanish	2.5%	2.9%
Italian	2.5%	1.5%

Table 26 shows the percentages of UG and PG subjects who reported having taken courses in English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian apart from at school or as major components in degree courses. The much higher percentages for PG subjects in respect of French and German is to be explained at least partly by the fact that they would have had more time and opportunity to take such courses than UG subjects.

The languages most often mentioned by UG subjects in this context were German and French, in that order. The PG data concur, except in the detail that French was mentioned by PG more often than German. In the PG column one notes the fact that Italian was more popular than Irish and Spanish combined.

TABLE 26 Percentages of subjects who reported having taken courses in English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian apart from at school or as major components of degree courses

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
English	0.4%	---
Irish	2.5%	3.4%
French	4.2%	21.3%
German	5.4%	18.4%
Spanish	1.3%	2.9%
Italian	2.1%	7.3%

1.3 LEARNING IRISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH AND ITALIAN AT SCHOOL

The data presented in 1.2.4 indicate that school tended to loom large as a factor in our subjects' experience of learning Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. It is therefore worth examining in some detail what subjects had to say about their exposure to languages at school.

1.3.1 Languages used as medium of instruction

Most subjects experienced Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at school as objects to be taught/learned rather than as themselves vehicles for teaching/learning processes (Tables 27 and 28). For example, the percentages of subjects reporting that they had experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at first and second level are consistently well below half those of subjects reporting that they had taken Irish at these levels

TABLE 27 Languages used as media of instruction by subjects' teachers at primary school

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
English	98.3%	88.9%
Irish	35.8%	34.3%
French	1.7%	2.9%
German	1.7%	1.0%
Spanish	0.4%	1.0%
Italian	---	---
No response	1.7%	1.0%

TABLE 28 Languages used as media of instruction by subjects' teachers at post-primary school

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
English	97.5%	87.4%
Irish	36.3%	28.5%
French	21.3%	14.0%
German	3.8%	2.4%
Spanish	1.3%	2.9%
Italian	0.8%	0.5%
No response	0.4%	1.0%

(Tables 23 and 24). In most subjects' experience, then, teaching and learning at school (including presumably the teaching and learning of Irish) went on through the medium of English. A similar point could be made with regard to French, German, Spanish and Italian.

1.3.2 Activities and learning materials in the language classroom

Table 29 shows the percentages of subjects who had taken English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at primary level who reported having performed various kinds of productive activities in connexion with learning these languages at primary level.

A re-analysis of these data (Table 30) in terms of the number of references to oral activities (repetition of individual sounds, repetition of whole phrases or sentences, oral grammar exercises, free conversation, debates) as opposed to written activities (written grammar exercises, essays, translations, summaries, project work) reveals the following trends. In the case of English, references to written activities predominate, which is hardly surprising, given that most of our subjects are native speakers of English and that the fostering of mother-tongue literacy is generally seen as a major function of the primary school. In the case of Irish and (particularly) French, references to oral activities predominate. In the case of the other languages oral and written activities were mentioned in roughly equal proportions.

From a further re-analysis (Table 31) of these same data in terms of the number of references to more self-expressive or "creative" activities (essays, summaries, project work, free conversation, debates) as opposed to more "mechanical" activities (repetition of individual sounds, repetition of whole phrases or sentences, oral grammar exercises, written grammar exercises, translations), where the scope for self-expression is more limited the following trends emerge. As far as English is concerned references to "creative" activities predominate in the UG data (in the ratio of approximately 7:6), and references to "mechanical" activities predominate in the PG data (in roughly the same ratio). In the case of the other languages there is a more marked predominance of references to "mechanical" activities over references to "creative" activities (the ratio in most cases approaching or exceeding 2:1). The explanation for the way in which English stands apart here again probably relates to the fact that it is the mother tongue of most of our subjects. Primary school teachers presumably feel that their pupils are more likely to be able to be "creative" in a language with which they are already very familiar than in languages the rudiments of which they are still in the process of learning. The difference between the UG and PG

TABLE 29 Productive activities referred to by subjects in relation to learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at primary school. References are expressed as percentages of numbers of subjects who took each language at primary level

UC

	English (234)	Irish (195)	French (56)	German (4)	Spanish (4)	Italian (-)
Repeating individual sounds	41.5%	71.8%	83.9%	100.0%	50.0%	-
Repeating whole phrases/ sentences	50.4%	93.3%	87.5%	50.0%	50.0%	-
Oral grammar exercises	67.1%	83.1%	66.1%	50.0%	75.0%	-
Written grammar exercises	85.9%	96.9%	76.8%	75.0%	75.0%	-
Essays	90.2%	93.3%	33.9%	50.0%	75.0%	-
Translations	18.4%	78.5%	57.1%	50.0%	75.0%	-
Summaries	58.1%	38.5%	19.6%	50.0%	50.0%	-
Project work	52.6%	17.9%	12.5%	50.0%	---	-
Free conversation	55.6%	56.4%	32.1%	50.0%	50.0%	-
Debates	41.5%	23.6%	5.4%	---	---	-

PG

	English (189)	Irish (156)	French (38)	German (2)	Spanish (3)	Italian (-)
Repeating individual sounds	47.1%	67.3%	71.1%	50.0%	66.7%	-
Repeating whole phrases/ sentences	59.8%	85.3%	81.6%	50.0%	66.7%	-
Oral grammar exercises	75.1%	66.5%	68.4%	100.0%	66.7%	-
Written grammar exercises	90.5%	93.0%	76.3%	100.0%	66.7%	-
Essays	89.9%	88.5%	36.8%	50.0%	66.7%	-
Translations	24.9%	71.8%	47.4%	---	66.7%	-
Summaries	57.7%	44.9%	13.2%	50.0%	66.7%	-
Project work	25.9%	4.5%	13.2%	---	33.3%	-
Free conversation	49.2%	53.2%	31.6%	---	66.7%	-
Debates	39.2%	23.7%	2.6%	---	33.3%	-

data for English may reflect a movement towards a more "creative" approach to the teaching of English at primary level in recent years.

TABLE 30 Subjects' experience of oral and written productive language learning activities in respect of English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at primary level

	UG		PG	
	Number of references to oral activities	Number of references to written activities	Number of references to oral activities	Number of references to written activities
English	599	714	511	546
Irish	640	634	493	472
French	154	112	97	71
German	10	11	4	4
Spanish	9	11	9	9
Italian	-	-	-	-

TABLE 31 Subjects' experience of "creative" and "mechanical" productive language learning activities in respect of English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at primary level

	UG		PG	
	Number of references to creative activities	Number of references to mechanical activities	Number, of references to creative activities	Number of references to mechanical activities
English	697	616	495	562
Irish	448	826	335	630
French	58	208	37	131
German	8	13	2	6
Spanish	7	13	8	10
Italian	-	-	-	-

Table 32 shows the percentages of subjects who took English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at post-primary level reporting that they had performed various kinds of productive activities in connexion with learning these languages at post-primary level.

TABLE 32 Productive activities referred to by subjects in relation to learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at post-primary school. References are expressed as percentages of numbers of subjects who took each language at post-primary level.

UG

	English (240)	Irish (198)	French (219)	German (52)	Spanish (28)	Italian (5)
Repeating individual sounds	13.8%	39.9%	74.9%	78.9%	64.3%	40.0%
Repeating whole phrases/ sentences	17.9%	61.1%	81.7%	84.6%	78.6%	100.0%
Oral grammar exercises	33.3%	71.7%	79.0%	84.6%	85.7%	100.0%
Written grammar exercises	66.7%	93.9%	49.3%	92.3%	85.7%	100.0%
Essays	92.9%	98.0%	97.3%	82.7%	82.1%	100.0%
Translations	15.4%	87.4%	96.8%	94.2%	92.9%	100.0%
Summaries	72.5%	71.2%	72.1%	40.4%	85.7%	80.0%
Project work	34.2%	16.2%	13.7%	7.7%	39.3%	---
Free conversation	50.0%	65.2%	58.0%	38.5%	64.3%	100.0%
Debates	67.5%	48.0%	10.0%	3.9%	10.7%	---

PG

	English (181)	Irish (154)	French (166)	German (32)	Spanish (26)	Italian (4)
Repeating individual sounds	27.6%	51.3%	81.9%	84.4%	42.3%	50.0%
Repeating whole phrases/ sentences	33.7%	76.6%	87.4%	93.8%	76.9%	75.0%
Oral grammar exercises	54.7%	81.2%	86.8%	100.0%	69.2%	25.0%
Written grammar exercises	86.7%	96.1%	96.4%	100.0%	88.5%	75.0%
Essays	100.0%	100.0%	90.4%	100.0%	92.3%	50.0%
Translations	25.4%	84.4%	97.0%	100.0%	92.3%	75.0%
Summaries	81.8%	68.2%	58.4%	50.0%	42.3%	25.0%
Project work	30.9%	8.4%	10.2%	9.4%	7.7%	---
Free conversation	54.7%	68.8%	54.8%	53.1%	61.5%	25.0%
Debates	70.2%	45.5%	10.2%	3.1%	23.1%	---

Tables 33 and 34 represent re-analyses of these data in terms, respectively, of references to oral as opposed to written activities and "creative" as opposed to "mechanical" activities. Table 33 shows that written activities were consistently mentioned more frequently than oral activities in respect of all the living curricular languages at second level. The predominance of references to written activities over references to oral activities is in general relatively slight, being most marked in the case of English, where the ratio is around 3:2 in the case of UG and 4:3 in the case of PG subjects. A likely

TABLE 33 Subjects' experience of oral and written productive language learning activities in respect of English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at second level

	UG		PG	
	Number of references to oral activities	Number of references to written activities	Number of references to oral activities	Number of references to written activities
English	438	676	436	588
Irish	566	726	498	550
French	665	721	533	585
German	151	165	107	115
Spanish	85	108	71	84
Italian	17	19	7	9

TABLE 34 Subjects' experience of "creative" and "mechanical" productive language learning activities in respect of English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at second level

	UG		PG	
	Number of references to creative activities	Number of references to mechanical activities	Number of references to creative activities	Number of references to mechanical activities
English	761	353	611	413
Irish	591	701	448	600
French	550	836	372	746
German	90	226	69	153
Spanish	79	114	59	96
Italian	14	22	4	12

explanation for the position of English in this context has already been advanced in connexion with English written activities at primary level: most of our subjects are native speakers of English, and the traditional role of school in mother-tongue acquisition relates to the development of reading and writing skills.

With regard to Table 34, the only language in respect of which references to more "creative" learning activities predominate over references to more "mechanical" activities is English. Again this probably reflects teachers' assumptions about what are appropriate or possible as mother-tongue learning activities as opposed to second language learning activities. The fact that "creative" activities were mentioned proportionally more frequently by UG than by PG subjects may, as in the case of English at primary level, relate to recent trends in the teaching of English. As far as languages other than English are concerned, references to "mechanical" activities consistently predominate, this predominance being least marked in the case of Irish. The finding with regard to Irish may be related to second-level teachers' allowing for more "creative" possibilities in Irish on the basis that since Irish, unlike the continental languages, is routinely taken at primary school, pupils will be more familiar with it and therefore will be able to do more in it.

Table 35 shows the percentages of subjects who had taken English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at primary school reporting that they had been exposed to various kinds of learning materials at that level.

In Table 36 this information is re-analysed in terms of the numbers of references to textual as opposed to non-textual/audio-visual learning materials. References to textual materials clearly predominate except in the UG data for French and German and in the PG data for Spanish. As far as French and German are concerned, the equal numbers of references to textual and non-textual materials in the UG data as opposed to a preponderance of references to textual materials in the PG data may reflect a trend towards a greater diversity of language learning materials. Actually, the UG data for English and Irish also show proportionally greater numbers of references to non-textual materials than the PG data, and this may relate to a similar trend. The data exhibiting a more marked overall predominance of references to textual materials are those for English. What has already been said about the traditional role of school in mother-tongue acquisition probably applies here too.

TABLE 35 Language learning materials referred to by subjects in relation to learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at primary school. References are expressed as percentages of the numbers of subjects who took each language at primary school.

UG

	English (234)	Irish (195)	French (56)	German (4)	Spanish (4)	Italian (-)
Textbooks	92.7%	99.0%	96.4%	100.0%	75.0%	-
Slides	8.1%	21.5%	33.9%	25.0%	25.0%	-
Filmstrips	7.7%	14.9%	28.6%	50.0%	---	-
Tapes/records of speech	10.7%	28.7%	60.7%	25.0%	25.0%	-
Tapes/records of songs	17.9%	29.2%	26.8%	25.0%	25.0%	-
Video tapes	3.4%	3.6%	8.9%	25.0%	---	-
Extracts from newspapers/ magazines	42.7%	34.9%	26.8%	50.0%	50.0%	-
Literary works	85.0%	76.9%	41.1%	50.0%	---	-
Language lab	1.7%	1.0%	5.4%	50.0%	---	-

PG

	English (189)	Irish (156)	French (38)	German (2)	Spanish (3)	Italian (-)
Textbooks	97.4%	98.1%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	-
Slides	3.7%	2.6%	5.3%	---	33.3%	-
Filmstrips	4.2%	1.3%	10.5%	---	66.7%	-
Tapes/records of speech	5.8%	6.4%	36.8%	---	66.7%	-
Tapes/records of songs	12.7%	7.7%	23.7%	50.0%	100.0%	-
Video tapes	1.1%	---	5.3%	---	33.3%	-
Extracts from newspapers/ magazines	30.2%	23.1%	18.4%	50.0%	33.3%	-
Literary works	84.7%	77.6%	50.0%	50.0%	66.7%	-
Language lab	0.5%	0.6%	5.3%	---	33.3%	-

TABLE 36 Subjects' experience of textual and non-textual/audio-visual language learning materials in respect of English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at primary level

	UG		PG	
	No. of refs to textual materials	No. of refs to non-textual materials	No. of refs to textual materials	No. of refs to non-textual materials
English	516	116	401	53
Irish	411	193	310	29
French	92	92	65	33
German	8	8	4	1
Spanish	5	3	6	10
Italian	-	-	-	-

Table 37 shows the percentages of subjects who had taken English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at post-primary school reporting that they had been exposed to various kinds of language learning materials at that level.

In Table 38 these data are re-analysed in terms of the frequency with which subjects mentioned experience of textual as opposed to non-textual/audio-visual language learning materials in the context of post-primary education. It is noticeable that, with the single exception of the UG data for Spanish, references to textual materials consistently predominate. However, it is also the case that in the UG data the preponderance of references to textual materials over references to non-textual materials is consistently less marked than in the PG data (actually being reversed in the case of Spanish). This may reflect a trend towards less reliance on textual materials in language teaching generally. The languages in respect of which the preponderance of references to textual materials is heaviest are English and Irish. The explanation for the fact that English features here in the way it does presumably relates to what has already been said about it in connexion with written learning activities at second level. As far as Irish is concerned, one might speculate that the teaching of this language has been less influenced than the teaching of the continental languages by the audio-visual "revolution" and/or that the above-postulated assumption that second-level pupils are already familiar with the language leads teachers to turn more readily than in the case of the continental languages to the study of literature.

TABLE 37 Language learning materials referred to by subjects in relation to English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at post-primary school. References are expressed as percentages of the numbers of subjects who took each language at post-primary level.

UG

	English (240)	Irish (198)	French (219)	German (52)	Spanish (28)	Italian (5)
Textbooks	88.3%	98.5%	98.2%	96.2%	96.4%	100.0%
Slides	4.2%	6.1%	38.8%	19.2%	46.4%	40.0%
Filmstrips	6.7%	5.6%	34.3%	21.2%	35.7%	40.0%
Tapes/records of speech	13.8%	29.3%	70.3%	44.2%	60.7%	80.0%
Tapes/records of songs	8.3%	24.2%	36.1%	19.2%	42.9%	---
Video tapes	4.2%	2.5%	12.8%	7.7%	25.0%	20.0%
Extracts from newspapers/ magazines	51.3%	59.6%	68.5%	59.6%	42.9%	100.0%
Literary works	87.5%	95.5%	85.4%	61.5%	53.6%	80.0%
Language lab	0.8%	4.0%	19.6%	21.2%	32.1%	20.0%

PG

	English (181)	Irish (154)	French (166)	German (32)	Spanish (26)	Italian (4)
Textbooks	100.0%	100.0%	98.2%	100.0%	92.3%	100.0%
Slides	5.0%	4.5%	21.7%	15.6%	15.4%	---
Filmstrips	8.3%	3.9%	19.3%	25.0%	7.7%	---
Tapes/records of speech	13.3%	16.9%	57.2%	46.9%	23.1%	---
Tapes/records of songs	6.6%	13.6%	34.9%	31.3%	26.9%	---
Video tapes	2.8%	---	4.2%	6.3%	3.8%	---
Extracts from newspapers/ magazines	48.6%	55.8%	50.0%	59.4%	46.2%	25.0%
Literary works	96.7%	97.4%	84.3%	96.9%	88.5%	25.0%
Language lab	5.0%	2.6%	11.5%	25.0%	19.2%	---

TABLE 38 Subjects' experience of textual and non-textual/audio-visual language learning materials in respect of English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at post-primary level.

	UG		PG	
	No. of refs to textual materials	No. of refs to non-textual materials	No. of refs to textual materials	No. of refs to non-textual materials
English	545	91	444	74
Irish	502	142	393	64
French	552	464	386	247
German	113	69	65	48
Spanish	54	68	59	25
Italian	14	10	6	-

1.3.3 Enjoyment

A large majority of our subjects seem to have regarded language learning as in principle enjoyable (Table 39).

TABLE 39 Subjects' expressed opinion on the question: "Do you think language learning is enjoyable?"

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
Yes	70.4%	70.1%
No	20.4%	22.2%
Ambiguous or qualified answer	7.1%	4.8%
No response	2.1%	2.9%

In relation to particular language learning experiences, however, subjects' perspectives were rather more varied. Tables 40 and 41 summarize subjects' responses in relation to the living curricular languages to questions about the languages they had most and least enjoyed learning at, respectively, primary and post-primary school. As far as most of these languages are concerned, the balance tends to be tipped on the "enjoyed most" side. This is consistently true in the case of English, French, Spanish, and Italian. In the case of German it is true of the data for primary level but not of the data for second level, which show a slight preponderance of replies stating that German was the language least enjoyed. In the data for Irish there is a consistent majority of responses in the "enjoyed least" category. This predominance is consistently clear, but is somewhat heavier in the data conerning primary school experiences.

TABLE 40 Subjects' expressed enjoyment of learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at primary level (percentages refer to total numbers of subjects who had taken each language at primary level)

"Enjoyed most"

	UG		PG	
English	53.4%	(125/234)	56.1%	(106/189)
Irish	26.7%	(52/195)	26.9%	(42/156)
French	39.3%	(22/56)	34.2%	(13/38)
German	75.0%	(3/4)	0.0%	(0/2)
Spanish	25.0%	(1/4)	66.7%	(2/3)
Italian	---	(0/0)	---	(0/0)

"Enjoyed least"

	UG		PG	
English	13.7%	(32/234)	10.6%	(20/189)
Irish	54.4%	(106/195)	50.0%	(78/156)
French	33.9%	(19/56)	18.4%	(7/38)
German	0.0%	(0/4)	0.0%	(0/2)
Spanish	0.0%	(0/4)	0.0%	(0/3)
Italian	---	(0/0)	---	(0/0)

TABLE 41 Subjects' expressed enjoyment of learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at post-primary level (percentages refer to total numbers of subjects who had taken each language at post-primary level)

"Enjoyed most"

	UG		PG	
English	30.8%	(74/240)	40.9%	(74/181)
Irish	21.7%	(43/198)	23.4%	(36/154)
French	35.2%	(77/219)	30.7%	(51/166)
German	23.1%	(12/52)	21.9%	(7/32)
Spanish	28.6%	(8/28)	38.5%	(10/26)
Italian	60.0%	(3/5)	25.0%	(1/4)

"Enjoyed least"

	UG		PG	
English	14.2%	(34/240)	10.5%	(19/181)
Irish	32.8%	(65/198)	33.8%	(52/154)
French	21.5%	(47/219)	22.9%	(38/166)
German	23.1%	(12/52)	25.0%	(8/32)
Spanish	25.0%	(7/28)	11.5%	(3/26)
Italian	0.0%	(0/5)	0.0%	(0/4)

1.4 LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFICIENCY IN IRISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH AND ITALIAN

1.4.1 The four skills

In response to questions about their skills in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian, subjects in general more frequently claimed ability in the receptive skills (understanding speech and reading) than in the productive skills (speaking and writing) (Table 42).

TABLE 42 Percentages of subjects' claiming ability in the four language skills in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
	Understanding speech	
Irish	77.5%	66.7%
French	82.9%	65.2%
German	25.4%	19.3%
Spanish	10.8%	13.5%
Italian	6.3%	14.0%
	Speaking	
Irish	73.8%	61.4%
French	74.2%	58.9%
German	22.9%	16.9%
Spanish	8.3%	11.1%
Italian	5.8%	8.7%
	Reading	
Irish	78.8%	66.7%
French	87.5%	67.6%
German	23.3%	23.7%
Spanish	9.6%	15.5%
Italian	6.7%	14.0%
	Writing	
Irish	75.0%	51.7%
French	79.2%	49.3%
German	17.5%	11.6%
Spanish	8.3%	9.7%
Italian	5.0%	4.4%

Our data on how subjects, according to themselves, actually make use of two of these skills - reading and writing - are summarized in Tables 43-46. Consistently among the most frequently mentioned reading matter are newspapers and magazines. One noticeable difference between the UG and the PG data on what subjects normally read in particular languages is the way in which academic articles figure more prominently in the latter than in the former as far as French and German are concerned. As for subjects' reports on what they usually write in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian, letters are consistently most frequently mentioned in this context.

TABLE 43 What UG subjects who claimed to be able to read Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian reported they usually read in those languages

	Irish (189)	French (210)	German (56)	Spanish (23)	Italian (16)
Books	52.9%	40.5%	33.9%	30.4%	50.0%
Newspapers	53.4%	40.5%	41.1%	43.5%	43.8%
Comics	8.5%	13.3%	8.9%	8.7%	18.8%
Magazines	32.8%	55.2%	53.6%	34.8%	75.0%
Light lit.	37.0%	28.6%	26.8%	17.4%	50.0%
Serious lit.	17.5%	14.8%	16.1%	26.1%	31.3%
Business letters	10.1%	7.1%	8.9%	---	6.3%
Personal letters	15.3%	30.5%	37.5%	26.1%	31.3%
Academic articles	22.2%	17.1%	19.6%	13.0%	25.0%
Conference papers	4.8%	2.4%	5.4%	---	---
Poetry	48.7%	27.1%	19.6%	21.7%	50.0%
Telegrams	4.2%	5.2%	5.4%	4.4%	12.5%
Other	11.1%	10.0%	17.9%	---	6.3%

TABLE 44 What PG subjects who claimed to be able to read Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian reported they usually read in those languages

	Irish (138)	French (140)	German (49)	Spanish (32)	Italian (29)
Books	42.0%	42.9%	32.7%	40.6%	31.0%
Newspapers	53.6%	49.3%	44.9%	53.1%	41.4%
Comics	2.9%	15.7%	10.2%	9.4%	10.3%
Magazines	27.5%	52.9%	40.8%	50.0%	44.8%
Light lit.	27.5%	26.4%	20.4%	25.0%	13.8%
Serious lit.	20.3%	30.0%	24.5%	28.1%	24.1%
Business letters	23.9%	26.4%	22.5%	6.3%	3.5%
Personal letters	16.7%	36.4%	34.7%	25.0%	24.1%
Academic articles	14.5%	44.3%	51.0%	9.4%	24.1%
Conference papers	8.7%	24.3%	28.6%	6.3%	13.8%
Poetry	37.0%	30.7%	22.5%	18.8%	17.2%
Telegrams	4.4%	10.0%	10.2%	12.5%	3.5%
Other	12.3%	14.3%	12.2%	9.4%	6.9%

TABLE 45 What UG subjects who claimed to be able to write Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian reported they usually wrote in those languages

	Irish (180)	French (190)	German (42)	Spanish (20)	Italian (12)
Letters	33.3%	54.7%	73.8%	35.0%	58.3%
Academic articles	22.2%	11.6%	16.7%	5.0%	---
Newspaper/magazine articles	3.3%	1.6%	9.5%	5.0%	16.7%
Telegrams	3.9%	5.3%	7.1%	---	25.0%
Poetry	5.0%	1.1%	2.4%	---	---
Short stories	10.0%	7.4%	4.8%	---	25.0%
Books	1.1%	---	2.4%	---	8.3%
Lecture notes	15.0%	8.4%	16.7%	20.0%	33.3%
Messages	23.9%	21.1%	21.4%	15.0%	41.7%
Other	15.0%	11.6%	9.5%	5.0%	33.3%

TABLE 46 What PG subjects who claimed to be able to write Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian reported they usually wrote in those languages

	Irish (107)	French (102)	German (24)	Spanish (20)	Italian (9)
Letters	43.0%	70.6%	75.0%	85.0%	88.9%
Academic articles	12.2%	9.8%	4.2%	10.0%	11.1%
Newspaper/magazine articles	7.5%	2.0%	---	---	---
Telegrams	8.4%	10.8%	12.5%	15.0%	11.1%
Poetry	7.5%	4.9%	---	---	---
Short stories	3.7%	2.0%	---	5.0%	---
Books	2.8%	---	---	---	---
Lecture notes	18.7%	16.7%	16.7%	15.0%	22.2%
Messages	29.0%	29.4%	25.0%	35.0%	55.6%
Other	23.4%	19.6%	25.0%	15.0%	33.3%

Some more general information on the kinds of use subjects said they had made of their language skills in languages other than their first (i.e. for most of them, in languages other than English) is presented in Table 47. It will be noted that, by and large, those language activities which were referred to by the highest proportions of subjects are receptive (listening, watching, reading) rather than productive (conversing, singing, writing), and that the one activity which fewer than 50% of subjects reported having performed involves writing.

TABLE 47 Uses to which subjects reported having put their language skills in languages other than their first

	UC (N=240)	PC (N=207)
Listened to speech for more than a few minutes	95.0%	92.3%
Listened to radio programmes	80.8%	86.0%
Watched films without subtitles	60.8%	69.6%
Listened to songs	92.5%	93.2%
Read newspapers/ magazines	90.0%	90.8%
Conversed with a foreigner in own country	65.4%	73.4%
Sang songs	65.4%	64.7%
Wrote to pen-pal	45.0%	39.1%
Watched television programmes	80.8%	78.3%

Tables 48-55 summarize responses to a question which asked subjects to indicate on a five-point scale how difficult they found reading, writing, speaking and understanding speech with respect to languages other than their first. Abstracted from this information in Tables 56 and 57 are the numbers of times specific skills and specific languages most often elicited particular categories of difficulty. Some further re-analysis is represented in Table 58, which sets out the percentages of subjects' responses accounted for by the use of the "very hard" and "hard" categories with respect to particular skills in particular languages. It emerges from Tables 48-56 and from Table 58 that on the whole the productive skills (speaking and writing) are more generally perceived as difficult than the receptive skills (understanding speech and reading). It is also clear from Tables 48-55 and from Tables 57-58 that of the living curricular languages specified Irish is proportionally least widely perceived as difficult to operate in and German, by and large, is proportionally most widely perceived as difficult to operate in.

TABLE 48 UG subjects' difficulty rating for understanding speech in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of UG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (201)	9.0%	22.4%	33.3%	17.9%	10.5%	7.0%
French (221)	18.6%	34.8%	27.2%	11.8%	3.6%	4.1%
German (86)	17.4%	26.7%	26.7%	9.3%	4.7%	15.1%
Spanish (37)	10.8%	29.7%	32.4%	2.7%	8.1%	16.2%
Italian (19)	---	21.1%	52.6%	10.5%	15.8%	---

TABLE 49 PG subjects' difficulty rating for understanding speech in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of PG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (161)	7.5%	13.7%	34.8%	17.4%	15.5%	11.2%
French (187)	17.1%	25.1%	21.9%	17.6%	8.0%	10.2%
German (74)	23.0%	27.0%	18.9%	12.2%	5.4%	13.5%
Spanish (41)	19.5%	22.0%	26.8%	9.8%	12.2%	9.8%
Italian (32)	3.1%	28.1%	34.4%	6.3%	9.4%	18.8%

TABLE 50 UG subjects' difficulty rating for speaking in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentaces relate to number of UG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (201)	7.5%	25.4%	34.8%	16.9%	8.5%	7.0%
French (221)	17.6%	38.9%	29.4%	6.8%	3.2%	4.1%
German (86)	20.9%	32.6%	19.8%	7.0%	4.7%	15.1%
Spanish (37)	18.9%	37.8%	18.9%	---	8.1%	16.2%
Italian (19)	5.3%	42.1%	31.6%	21.1%	---	---

TABLE 51 PG subjects' difficulty rating for speaking in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of PG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (161)	12.4%	19.9%	35.4%	12.4%	9.9%	9.9%
French (187)	21.4%	27.3%	27.3%	9.1%	5.9%	9.1%
German (74)	23.0%	32.4%	13.5%	12.2%	5.4%	13.5%
Spanish (41)	22.0%	24.4%	19.5%	12.2%	12.2%	9.8%
Italian (32)	6.3%	43.8%	21.9%	3.1%	9.4%	15.6%

TABLE 52 UG subjects' difficulty rating for reading in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of UG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (201)	5.5%	22.4%	39.3%	15.4%	10.4%	7.0%
French (221)	3.6%	24.0%	48.4%	17.7%	2.3%	4.1%
German (86)	24.4%	30.2%	18.6%	11.6%	---	15.1%
Spanish (37)	8.1%	29.7%	29.7%	13.5%	2.7%	16.2%
Italian (19)	---	36.8%	36.8%	21.1%	5.3%	---

TABLE 53 PG subjects' difficulty rating for reading in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of PG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (161)	5.0%	19.9%	29.8%	20.5%	14.9%	9.9%
French (187)	8.0%	21.9%	31.0%	19.3%	11.2%	8.6%
German (74)	17.6%	32.4%	18.9%	10.8%	6.8%	13.5%
Spanish (41)	7.3%	19.5%	31.7%	14.6%	14.6%	12.2%
Italian (32)	---	28.1%	37.5%	15.6%	3.1%	15.6%

TABLE 54 UG subjects' difficulty rating for writing in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of UG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (201)	10.0%	33.3%	30.8%	11.9%	7.0%	7.0%
French (221)	10.9%	35.3%	39.4%	9.5%	0.9%	4.1%
German (86)	39.5%	26.7%	11.6%	7.0%	---	15.1%
Spanish (37)	13.5%	37.8%	13.5%	18.9%	---	16.2%
Italian (19)	10.5%	47.4%	26.3%	15.8%	---	---

TABLE 55 PG subjects' difficulty rating for writing in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of PG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (161)	13.7%	23.6%	32.3%	11.8%	8.1%	10.6%
French (187)	22.5%	28.9%	24.6%	9.6%	4.3%	10.2%
German (74)	44.6%	23.0%	6.8%	6.8%	5.4%	13.5%
Spanish (41)	26.8%	26.8%	19.5%	4.9%	9.8%	12.2%
Italian (32)	34.4%	21.9%	21.9%	---	3.1%	18.8%

TABLE 56 Numbers of times particular categories of difficulty were most often used in respect of each of the four skills in the data relating to Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
			UG		
Understanding speech	0	1.5	3.5	0	0
Speaking	0	4	1	0	0
Reading	0	2	3	0	0
Writing	1	3	1	0	0
			PG		
Understanding speech	0	2	3	0	0
Speaking	0	3.5	1.5	0	0
Reading	0	1	4	0	0
Writing	2.5	1.5	1	0	0

TABLE 57 Numbers of times particular categories of difficulty were most often used in respect of the four skills in relation to Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
			UG		
Irish	0	1	3	0	0
French	0	2	2	0	0
German	1	2.5	0.5	0	0
Spanish	0	2.5	1.5	0	0
Italian	0	2.5	1.5	0	0
			PG		
Irish	0	0	4	0	0
French	0	2.5	1.5	0	0
German	1	3	0	0	0
Spanish	0.5	1.5	2	0	0
Italian	1	1	2	0	0

NOTE: Where two categories were equally often applied to a particular skill in a particular language and were opted for more frequently than other categories, each has been assigned the value 0.5 in Tables 56 and 57.

TABLE 58 Percentages of subjects' responses accounted for by use of the "very hard" and "hard" categories with respect to particular skills in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

		UG	PG
Understanding speech	Irish	31.3%	21.1%
	French	53.4%	42.3%
	German	44.2%	50.0%
	Spanish	40.5%	41.5%
	Italian	21.1%	31.3%
Speaking	Irish	32.8%	32.3%
	French	56.6%	48.7%
	German	53.5%	55.4%
	Spanish	56.8%	46.3%
	Italian	47.4%	50.0%
Reading	Irish	27.9%	24.9%
	French	27.6%	30.0%
	German	54.7%	50.0%
	Spanish	37.8%	26.8%
	Italian	36.8%	28.1%
Writing	Irish	43.3%	37.3%
	French	46.2%	51.3%
	German	66.3%	67.6%
	Spanish	51.4%	53.7%
	Italian	57.9%	56.3%

1.4.2 Particular productive difficulties

More detailed information on the perceived difficulty of producing utterances in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian is given in Tables 59-70, which summarize subjects' difficulty-rating of six aspects of productive language use:

1. "getting the exact form right"
2. "finding the right word for a particular thing, idea, etc."
3. "getting the word order right"
4. "pronouncing the words properly"
5. "finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say"
6. "getting the right intonation".

Tables 71 and 72 abstract from this information the numbers of times specific aspects of productive use and specific languages most often elicited particular categories of difficulty. Table 73 represents a further re-processing of the information contained in Tables 59-70; it displays the percentages of subjects' responses in which the category "very hard" or the category "hard" was opted for in respect of particular aspects of production in particular languages.

It is clear from Tables 59-71 and Table 73 that item 5 - "finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation" - is most generally perceived as difficult amongst our subjects, and that this perception is language-independent. This is perhaps explicable in terms of the complexity of the item, which explicitly incorporates a pragmatic dimension ("in a particular situation") as well as semantic ("for exactly what you want to say") and syntactic ("turn of phrase") dimensions. A more pessimistic interpretation would be that the second language training received by our subjects was least effective in the preparation for actual communication through whatever second language(s) was/were learned. Apparently next most generally perceived as difficult are items 1 ("getting the exact form right") and 2 ("finding the right word for a particular thing, idea, etc."), which in respect of most of these languages were rated difficult by about a third to about a half of the subjects who had taken those languages.

TABLE 59 UG subjects' difficulty rating for getting the exact form right in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to the number of UG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (201)	12.4%	33.8%	30.9%	12.9%	4.0%	6.0%
French (221)	9.5%	26.7%	40.7%	18.1%	2.7%	2.3%
German (86)	27.9%	27.9%	18.6%	3.5%	1.2%	20.9%
Spanish (37)	18.9%	27.0%	18.9%	10.8%	2.7%	21.6%
Italian (19)	5.3%	31.6%	42.1%	10.5%	5.3%	5.3%

TABLE 60 PG subjects' difficulty rating for getting the exact form right in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to the number of PG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (161)	8.7%	29.8%	27.3%	17.4%	5.0%	11.8%
French (187)	9.6%	27.3%	35.3%	13.9%	3.2%	10.7%
German (74)	24.3%	31.1%	17.6%	6.8%	2.7%	17.6%
Spanish (41)	4.9%	22.0%	26.8%	22.0%	7.3%	17.1%
Italian (32)	3.1%	31.2%	37.5%	3.1%	---	25.0%

TABLE 61 UG subjects' difficulty rating for finding the right word in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to the total number of UG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (201)	8.0%	31.3%	33.8%	18.9%	2.5%	5.5%
French (221)	5.0%	39.8%	42.1%	10.4%	0.5%	2.3%
German (86)	23.3%	26.7%	24.4%	4.7%	---	20.9%
Spanish (37)	13.5%	32.4%	21.6%	5.4%	5.4%	21.6%
Italian (19)	5.3%	26.3%	57.9%	5.3%	---	5.3%

TABLE 62 PG subjects' difficulty rating for finding the right word in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to total number of PG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (161)	6.2%	36.6%	26.7%	14.3%	4.4%	11.8%
French (187)	10.7%	34.2%	34.8%	7.0%	2.7%	10.7%
German (74)	14.9%	39.2%	20.3%	5.4%	2.7%	17.6%
Spanish (41)	2.4%	24.4%	29.3%	22.0%	2.4%	19.5%
Italian (32)	3.1%	34.4%	31.3%	6.3%	---	25.0%

TABLE 63 UG subjects' difficulty rating for getting the word order right in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to the total number of UG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (201)	5.0%	12.4%	39.8%	30.3%	6.5%	6.0%
French (221)	4.5%	21.3%	50.7%	18.1%	3.6%	1.8%
German (86)	22.1%	29.1%	20.9%	4.7%	2.3%	20.9%
Spanish (37)	13.5%	18.9%	35.1%	5.4%	5.4%	21.6%
Italian (19)	---	21.1%	57.9%	15.8%	---	5.3%

TABLE 64 PG subjects' difficulty rating for getting the word order right in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to total number of PG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (161)	3.7%	9.9%	36.0%	21.7%	18.0%	10.6%
French (187)	4.8%	19.3%	36.9%	21.4%	7.0%	10.7%
German (74)	13.5%	35.1%	20.3%	9.5%	4.1%	17.6%
Spanish (41)	2.4%	12.2%	24.4%	24.4%	19.5%	17.1%
Italian (32)	3.1%	21.9%	46.9%	3.1%	3.1%	21.9%

TABLE 65 UG subjects' difficulty rating for pronouncing the words properly in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of UG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (201)	4.0%	10.5%	34.8%	34.3%	10.9%	5.5%
French (221)	13.1%	27.2%	33.5%	18.1%	5.9%	2.3%
German (86)	5.8%	16.3%	27.9%	25.6%	3.5%	20.9%
Spanish (37)	10.8%	10.8%	29.7%	18.9%	8.1%	21.6%
Italian (19)	5.3%	21.1%	26.3%	26.3%	15.8%	5.3%

TABLE 66 PG subjects' difficulty rating for pronouncing the words properly in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of PG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (161)	3.7%	6.8%	31.7%	29.2%	15.5%	13.0%
French (187)	17.1%	20.3%	31.0%	14.4%	6.4%	10.7%
German (74)	6.8%	6.8%	29.7%	24.3%	14.9%	17.6%
Spanish (41)	7.3%	4.9%	24.4%	22.0%	26.8%	14.6%
Italian (32)	---	6.3%	34.4%	21.9%	12.5%	25.0%

TABLE 67 UG subjects' difficulty rating for finding the right turn of phrase in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of UG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (201)	11.4%	39.8%	30.3%	10.0%	2.5%	6.0%
French (221)	16.7%	54.3%	23.1%	2.7%	0.9%	2.3%
German (86)	29.1%	33.7%	15.1%	1.2%	---	20.9%
Spanish (37)	18.9%	45.9%	10.8%	2.7%	---	21.6%
Italian (19)	10.5%	47.4%	36.8%	---	---	5.3%

TABLE 68 PG subjects' difficulty rating for finding the right turn of phrase in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of PG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (161)	12.4%	33.5%	26.1%	12.4%	3.7%	11.8%
French (187)	22.5%	40.6%	19.3%	5.9%	1.1%	10.7%
German (74)	25.7%	33.8%	17.6%	4.1%	1.4%	17.6%
Spanish (41)	12.2%	31.7%	26.8%	12.2%	---	17.1%
Italian (32)	6.3%	46.9%	21.9%	---	---	25.0%

TABLE 69 UG subjects' difficulty rating for getting the right intonation in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of UG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (201)	6.5%	19.9%	39.3%	21.4%	7.0%	6.0%
French (221)	13.1%	35.8%	31.7%	12.7%	4.5%	2.3%
German (86)	15.1%	18.6%	31.4%	12.8%	1.2%	20.9%
Spanish (37)	10.8%	27.0%	21.6%	13.5%	5.4%	21.6%
Italian (19)	5.3%	26.3%	36.8%	21.1%	5.3%	5.3%

TABLE 70 PG subjects' difficulty rating for getting the right intonation in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (percentages relate to number of PG subjects who knew each language)

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	No response
Irish (161)	4.4%	14.3%	32.9%	21.7%	14.3%	12.4%
French (187)	19.8%	27.8%	21.4%	15.0%	5.9%	10.2%
German (74)	10.8%	12.2%	29.7%	21.6%	8.1%	17.6%
Spanish (41)	7.3%	7.3%	29.3%	17.1%	22.0%	17.1%
Italian (32)	3.1%	12.5%	28.1%	21.9%	9.4%	25.0%

TABLE 71 Numbers of times particular categories of difficulty were most often used in relation to Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian (cumulatively) in respect of specific aspects of production

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
			UG		
Getting exact form right	0.5	2.5	2	0	0
Finding right word	0	2	3	0	0
Getting word order right	0	1	4	0	0
Pronouncing words properly	0	0	4.5	0.5	0
Finding right turn of phrase	0	5	0	0	0
Getting right intonation	0	2	3	0	0
			PG		
Getting exact form right	0	2	3	0	0
Finding right word	0	3	2	0	0
Getting word order right	0	1	3.5	0.5	0
Pronouncing words properly	0	0	4	0	1
Finding right turn of phrase	0	5	0	0	0
Getting right intonation	0	1	4	0	0

TABLE 72 Number of times particular categories of difficulty were most often used in respect of specific aspects of production (cumulatively) in relation to Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
			UG		
Irish	0	2	4	0	0
French	0	2	4	0	0
German	0.5	3.5	2	0	0
Spanish	0	4	2	0	0
Italian	0	1	4.5	0.5	0
			PG		
Irish	0	3	3	0	0
French	0	2	4	0	0
German	0	4	2	0	0
Spanish	0	1	3.5	0.5	1
Italian	0	2	4	0	0

NOTE: Where two categories were equally often applied to a particular skill in a particular language and were opted for more frequently than other categories each has been assigned the value 0.5 in Tables 80 and 81.

TABLE 73 Percentages of subjects' responses accounted for by use of the "very hard" and "hard" categories with respect to particular aspects of Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

		UG	PG
Getting exact form right	Irish	46.3%	38.5%
	French	36.2%	36.9%
	German	55.8%	55.4%
	Spanish	46.0%	26.8%
	Italian	36.8%	34.4%
Finding right word	Irish	39.3%	42.9%
	French	44.8%	44.9%
	German	50.0%	54.0%
	Spanish	46.0%	26.8%
	Italian	31.6%	37.5%
Getting word order right	Irish	17.4%	13.7%
	French	25.8%	24.1%
	German	51.2%	48.6%
	Spanish	32.4%	14.6%
	Italian	21.1%	25.0%
Pronouncing words properly	Irish	14.4%	10.6%
	French	40.3%	37.4%
	German	22.1%	13.5%
	Spanish	21.6%	12.2%
	Italian	26.3%	6.3%
Finding right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation	Irish	51.2%	46.0%
	French	71.0%	63.1%
	German	62.8%	59.5%
	Spanish	64.9%	43.9%
	Italian	57.9%	53.1%
Getting right intonation	Irish	26.4%	18.6%
	French	48.9%	47.6%
	German	33.7%	23.0%
	Spanish	37.8%	14.6%
	Italian	31.6%	15.6%

At the other end of the scale, items 3 ("getting the word order right") and 4 ("pronouncing the words properly") were, as far as most of these languages were concerned, characterized as difficult by around or less than a quarter of the subjects who had taken the languages in question. Notable exceptions are, in the case of item 3, German and, in the case of item 4, French. Both these exceptions are probably explicable in roughly similar terms: German word order and French pronunciation are both widely thought of as particularly divergent from corresponding aspects of English, and have traditionally occupied more time and space in the teaching of, respectively, German and French than in the teaching of other languages. Hence, presumably, the relatively heightened sense of difficulty. A similar kind of argument may be relevant to the French data regarding item 6 ("getting the right intonation"), an item rated as difficult in general by low to moderate proportions of subjects but by almost 50% of subjects in respect of French.

On the whole, the language-specific data on productive difficulties (Tables 59-70 and Tables 72-73) tend to confirm what is suggested by the language-specific data on the four skills (see 1.4.1 above), namely that German is proportionally more consistently perceived as difficult than other languages. However, no one language clearly emerges from these particular data as least widely perceived as difficult to use productively.

Chapter 2

Experience of learning Irish

2.1 NUMBERS (cf. Table 1, 1.1)

83.8% of UG subjects (201/240) and 77.8% of PG subjects (161/207) had learned Irish at some stage.

2.2 CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITUATIONS IN WHICH CONTACT WITH IRISH WAS ESTABLISHED

2.2.1 Home (cf. Tables 2-9, 1.2.1; Table 10, 1.2.2)

Very few of our subjects reported that Irish was their first language, that they had acquired Irish at the same time as English, or that their parents, partners or children were native speakers of the language. On the other hand, although no UG subjects and only three PG subjects stated that Irish was the sole language of their respective households, 3 UG subjects and 37 PG subjects reported that it was used in their homes alongside English, and only in respect of Irish is the home environment mentioned as a factor in the language learning experience by more than a handful of subjects. Moreover, 4.5% of the UG who had learned Irish (9/201) and 9.9% of the PG who had learned Irish (16/161) reported that they had begun learning the language before school age, and it is possible that exposure to Irish in the home was a factor in some of these cases.

2.2.2 Age (cf. Table 10, 1.2.2)

Whilst it was not rare for subjects to claim to have started learning Irish before the age of four (see 2.2.1 above), the overwhelming majority of subjects who had learned Irish reported having had their first encounter with the language between the ages of four and ten - in other words, during the normal primary school years: UG 87.1% (175/201), PG 77.6% (125/161). A small minority of subjects who had learned Irish reported having begun between the ages of eleven and seventeen - UG 1.5% (3/201), PG 3.1% (5/161); but none reported having begun after the age of seventeen.

2.2.3 Speech community (cf. Tables 11-19, 1.2.3)

Most subjects who had learned Irish specified that this learning experience had taken place in their "own country": UG 77.6% (156/201), PG 72.7% (117/161). However, a sizeable minority of both groups (UG 14.9% - 30/201, PG 16.8% - 27/161) reported that they had learned it in a "country where the language is native" as well as in their "own country" - which probably reflects the fact that they had spent some time in the Gaeltacht. For tiny percentages of subjects who had learned Irish (UG 0.5% - 1/201, PG 1.2% -2/161) the "country where the language is native" did not, apparently, constitute their "own country", and similarly tiny percentages (UG 0.5% - 1/201, PG 0.6% - 1/161) reported that they had learned Irish in some combination of situations other than the one mentioned above.

Nearly two fifths of UG subjects who had learned Irish (38.3% - 77/201) and just under a third of PG subjects who had learned Irish (31.7% - 51/161) reported having visited the Gaeltacht. What these subjects reported about their experience of using and hearing Irish in the Gaeltacht is summarized in Table 74.

TABLE 74 Communicative experience in the Gaeltacht of subjects who had learned Irish expressed as percentages of all subjects who had learned Irish and visited the Gaeltacht

	UG (77)	PG (51)
Irish spoken by them	58.4%	62.7%
Irish spoken to them	72.7%	62.7%
Irish spoken in their company	84.4%	72.5%
Irish and English spoken by them	29.9%	31.4%
Irish and English spoken to them	22.1%	27.5%
Irish and English spoken in their company	14.3%	21.6%

2.2.4 Factors in the learning experience (cf. Tables 20-26, 1.2.4)

Subjects' reports on the factors which played a role in their learning of Irish suggest that formal educational and cultural factors rather than personal contacts and relationships were predominant. This predominance, which recurs in the data for all languages other than English, is in the case of Irish rather less marked than in the case of French, rather more marked than in the case of Italian, and of roughly similar dimensions to what was found in respect of German and Spanish.

Of all the various factors specified, the most often mentioned individual factor in relation to the learning of Irish (as of French, German and Spanish) was school. As Table 75 illustrates, school was mentioned about as often as all other factors combined in this context.

TABLE 75 The importance of school as compared with all other factors in subjects' experience of learning Irish

	UG	PG
Number of times school mentioned	145	136
Number of times other factors mentioned	151	127

The vast majority of subjects who had learned Irish reported having taken it at primary school: UG 97.0% (195/201), PG 96.9% (156/161); and similar percentages of such subjects reported having taken Irish at post-primary school: UG 98.5% (198/201), PG 95.7% (154/161). About an eighth of subjects who had learned Irish reported having taken Irish as a degree subject: UG 12.4% (25/201), PG 11.8% (19/161); but only tiny percentages claimed to have learned or studied Irish by means of courses other than school or degree courses: UG 3.0% (6/201), PG 4.4% (7/161).

2.3 LEARNING IRISH AT SCHOOL

2.3.1 Irish as a medium of instruction (cf. Tables 27 and 28, 1.3.1)

Over half those subjects who had learned Irish had apparently experienced the language at school as one school subject among many. Only one UG and seven PG reported having had Irish as their sole medium of instruction at primary level; eight UG and eleven PG reported having had Irish as their sole medium of instruction at post-primary level. 44.1% of UG subjects (86/195) and 45.5% of PG subjects (71/156) who had taken Irish at primary school reported having been exposed to some teaching through the medium of Irish at that level; while 43.9% of UG subjects (87/198) and 38.3% of PG subjects (59/154) who had taken Irish at post-primary school reported having had this experience at that level.

2.3.2 Activities and learning materials in the Irish class (cf. Tables 29-38, 1.3.2)

In answer to questions about the kinds of productive activities they had been asked to perform as part of the process of learning Irish at school, both UG and PG subjects mentioned oral work slightly more often than written work in respect of primary school and somewhat less often than written work in respect of post-primary school. The findings for Irish in this regard were roughly similar to those for French. The Irish data concur with the data for all the living curricular languages apart from English in showing a marked prdominance of references to more "mechanical" learning activities over references to activities of a more self-expressive or "creative" kind in respect of both primary and second level.

As far as learning materials are concerned, references to textual as opposed to non-textual/audio-visual materials are consistently preponderant in respect of Irish at both primary and second level. Such consistency is not evident in the data for French, German and Spanish. Moreover, the preponderance of references to textual materials is generally more marked in the case of Irish than in the case of French, German, Spanish and Italian.

2.3.3 Enjoyment (cf. Tables 40 and 41, 1.3.3)

In respect both of primary and post-primary school, markedly more UG and PG subjects said that Irish was the language they had least enjoyed learning than said that it was the language they had most enjoyed learning. This trend contrasts with what was found for English, French, Spanish and Italian, and in its consistency and degree with what was found for German.

2.4 LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFICIENCY IN IRISH

2.4.1 The four skills (cf. Tables 42-58, 1.4.1)

Ability in the receptive skills, i.e. understanding speech and reading, in Irish (as in French, German, Spanish and Italian) was more frequently claimed by both UG and PG subjects than ability in the productive skills, i.e. speaking and writing (Table 76). Interestingly, proportionally more UG than PG claimed ability in each of the four skills.

TABLE 76 Ability in the four skills in Irish claimed by subjects who had learned Irish

	UG (201)	PG (161)
Understanding speech	92.5%	85.7%
Speaking	88.1%	78.9%
Reading	94.0%	85.7%
Writing	89.6%	66.5%

As far as our subjects' reported difficulties with the four skills in Irish are concerned, writing was most often categorized by both UG and PG subjects as "very hard" or "hard" and least often as "easy" or "very easy" (Table 77). Moreover, of the four skills this was the only one to be placed more frequently in the "very hard"/"hard" category than in either the "normal" or the "easy"/"very easy" category (Table 78). Speaking was consistently next most often placed in the "very hard"/"hard" category and next least often in the "easy"/"very easy" category (Table 77). However, both UG and PG subjects classed speaking more often as "normal" than as "very hard"/ "hard" (Table 78).

TABLE 77 Subjects' difficulty rating for the four skills in Irish

UG (201)

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Understanding speech	31.3%	33.3%	28.4%	7.0%
Speaking	32.8%	34.6%	25.4%	7.0%
Reading	27.9%	39.3%	25.9%	7.0%
Writing	43.3%	30.9%	18.9%	7.0%

PG (161)

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Understanding speech	21.1%	34.8%	32.9%	11.2%
Speaking	32.3%	35.4%	22.4%	9.9%
Reading	24.8%	29.8%	35.4%	9.9%
Writing	37.3%	32.3%	19.9%	10.6%

TABLE 78 Categorization of the four skills in Irish according to the highest number of subjects' responses

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy
		UG	
Understanding speech		*	
Speaking		*	
Reading		*	
Writing	*		
		PG	
Understanding speech		*	
Speaking		*	
Reading			*
Writing	*		

In other words, the data for Irish, like the data for most of the other living curricular languages, corroborate the widely intuited view that, since receptive skills outstrip productive skills from a fairly early stage of second language learning, learners are more comfortable receiving than producing their target language. UG and PC data do not concur quite so completely at the other end of the scale, but the tendency for productive skills in Irish to be more generally perceived as difficult than receptive skills is clear and consistent.

It is noteworthy that, in comparison with the whole set of subjects who had learned Irish, those subjects who had visited the Gaeltacht tended to report difficulties with the four skills in Irish less frequently (Table 79).

TABLE 79 Percentages of all subjects who had learned Irish reporting difficulties with the four skills, compared with percentages of subjects who had visited the Gaeltacht reporting difficulties with with four skills

	UG who had learned Irish (201)	No response	UG who had learned Irish and visited Gaeltacht (77)	No response
Understanding speech	31.3%	7.0%	13.0%	5.2%
Speaking	32.8%	7.0%	14.3%	5.2%
Reading	27.9%	7.0%	16.9%	5.2%
Writing	43.3%	7.0%	31.2%	5.2%
	PG who had learned Irish (161)	No response	PG who had learned Irish and visited Gaeltacht (51)	No response
Understanding speech	21.1%	11.2%	11.8%	---
Speaking	32.3%	9.9%	27.5%	---
Reading	24.8%	9.9%	13.7%	---
Writing	37.3%	10.6%	33.3%	---

A similar though not quite so consistent trend is revealed if one compares the difficulties reported by the whole set of subjects who had learned Irish with the difficulties reported by those subjects who had experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at second level. In general, difficulties with the four skills in Irish were reported proportionally less frequently by the latter group (Table 80).

TABLE 80 Percentages of all subjects who had learned Irish reporting difficulties with the four skills, compared with percentages of subjects who had experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at second level reporting difficulties with the four skills

	UG who had learned Irish (201)	No response	UG who had experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at second level (87)	No response
Understanding speech	31.3%	7.0%	21.8%	2.3%
Speaking	32.8%	7.0%	23.0%	2.3%
Reading	27.9%	7.0%	12.6%	2.3%
Writing	43.3%	7.0%	39.1%	2.3%
	PG who had learned Irish (161)	No response	PG who had experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at second level (59)	No response
Understanding speech	21.1%	11.2%	22.0%	13.6%
Speaking	32.3%	9.9%	32.2%	13.6%
Reading	24.8%	9.9%	17.0%	13.6%
Writing	37.3%	10.6%	25.4%	13.6%

Finally on this point, relative to the whole set of subjects who had learned Irish, those who at second level had been exposed to a variety of learning materials - including non-textual/audio-visual materials - reported difficulties with the four skills proportionally less frequently, whereas those who had used only or mainly textual materials at second level reported such difficulties proportionally more frequently (Tables 81 and 82).

TABLE 81 Percentages of all subjects who had learned Irish reporting difficulties with the four skills compared with percentages of subjects whose learning materials at second level had included non-textual/audio-visual materials reporting difficulties with the four skills

	UG who had learned Irish (201)	No response	UG whose learning materials included a/visual materials (77)	No response
Understanding speech	31.3%	7.0%	24.7%	6.5%
Speaking	32.8%	7.0%	29.9%	6.5%
Reading	27.9%	7.0%	26.0%	6.5%
Writing	43.3%	7.0%	39.0%	6.5%
	PG who had learned Irish (161)	No response	PG whose learning materals included a/visual materials (37)	No response
Understanding speech	21.1%	11.2%	18.9%	8.1%
Speaking	32.3%	9.9%	27.0%	8.1%
Reading	24.8%	9.9%	18.9%	8.1%
Writing	37.3%	10.6%	29.7%	8.1%

TABLE 82 Percentages of all subjects who had learned Irish reporting difficulties with the four skills, compared with percentages of subjects who had used only or mainly textual learning materials at second level reporting difficulties with the four skills

	UG who had learned Irish (201)	No response	UG who had used only/ mainly textual learning materials (120)	No response
Understanding speech	31.3%	7.0%	35.8%	6.7%
Speaking	32.8%	7.0%	35.0%	6.7%
Reading	27.9%	7.0%	30.8%	6.7%
Writing	43.3%	7.0%	45.8%	6.7%

	PG who had learned Irish (161)	No response	PG who had used only/ mainly textual learning materials (121)	No response
Understanding speech	21.1%	11.2%	22.3%	10.7%
Speaking	32.3%	9.9%	34.7%	10.7%
Reading	24.8%	9.9%	26.4%	10.7%
Writing	37.3%	10.6%	39.7%	10.7%

2.4.2 Particular productive difficulties (cf. Tables 59-73, 1.4.2)

Of the six aspects of producing Irish which subjects were asked to rate for difficulty, "finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation" was most often deemed "very hard"/"hard" and least often deemed "easy"/"very easy" (Table 83) and was markedly more often categorized as "very hard"/"hard" than "normal" or "easy"/"very easy" (Table 84). As was stated earlier (1.4.2), this item was most widely rated "very hard"/"hard" in respect of all the languages mentioned by subjects, and possible reasons for this have already been discussed.

TABLE 83 Subjects' difficulty rating of different aspects of speaking and writing Irish

UG
(201)

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Exact form	46.3%	30.8%	16.9%	6.0%
Right word	39.3%	33.8%	21.4%	5.5%
Word order	17.4%	39.8%	36.8%	6.0%
Pronunciation	14.4%	34.8%	45.3%	5.5%
Right turn of phrase	51.2%	30.3%	12.4%	6.0%
Intonation	26.4%	39.3%	28.4%	6.0%

PG
(161)

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Exact form	38.5%	27.3%	22.4%	11.8%
Right word	42.9%	26.7%	18.6%	11.8%
Word order	13.7%	36.0%	39.8%	10.6%
Pronunciation	10.6%	31.7%	44.7%	13.0%
Right turn of phrase	46.0%	26.1%	16.1%	11.8%
Intonation	18.6%	32.9%	36.0%	12.4%

The next most difficult aspects of speaking and writing Irish according to our subjects appear to be "getting the exact form right" and "finding the right word". Again this is in line with the trend which emerges from the data for other languages (cf. 1.4.2). UG and PG concurred in that more of them placed these items in the "very hard"/"hard" category than in either of the other categories (Table 84); they differed in that, whereas the UG categorized the former more often than the latter as "very hard"/"hard" and less often than the latter as "normal" or "easy"/"very easy", the PG did the reverse (Table 83).

TABLE 84 Categorization of different aspects of speaking and writing Irish according to the highest numbers of subjects' responses

---

	"v.hard"/"hard"	"normal"	"easy"/"v.easy"
UG			
Exact form	*		
Right word	*		
Word order		*	
Pronunciation			*
Right turn of phrase	*		
Intonation		*	
PG			
Exact form	*		
Right word	*		
Word order			*
Pronunciation			*
Right turn of phrase	*		
Intonation			*

At the other end of the scale, the item which in respect of Irish was characterized least often as "very hard"/"hard" and most often as "easy"/"very easy" was "pronouncing the words properly" (Table 83). Among both UG and PG subjects this item was found "easy"/"very easy" more often than it was found either "normal" or "very hard"/"hard" (Table 84). After pronunciation the item in Irish which most often cropped up in the "easy"/"very easy" and "normal" categories and next least often in the "very hard"/"hard" category was "getting the word order right". More UG subjects found this item "normal" than found it either "very hard"/"hard" or "easy"/"very easy"; while more PG subjects found it "easy"/"very easy" than found it either "very hard"/"hard" or "normal" (Tables 83 and 84).

Finally, "getting the right intonation" appears in the Irish data consistently fourth from the top in the "very hard"/"hard" section of Table 83 and third from the top in the "easy"/"very easy" section. UG subjects classified Irish intonation as "normal" more often than either "very hard"/"hard" or "easy"/"very easy", whereas PG subjects classified it more often as "easy"/"very easy" than as either "very hard"/"hard" or as "normal" (Table 84). Once again these findings by and large echo the findings for other languages (cf. 1.4.2).

If one compares the proportion of all subjects who had learned Irish reporting particular productive difficulties in Irish with the proportion of subjects who had visited the Gaeltacht reporting such difficulties (Table 85), one finds a consistent proportional decrease in difficulties noted by UG in the latter category but a contrary trend, on the whole, as far as PG are concerned.

TABLE 85 Percentages of all subjects who had learned Irish reporting particular productive difficulties, compared with percentages of subjects who had learned Irish and visited the Gaeltacht reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned Irish (201)	No response	UG who had learned Irish and visited Gaeltacht (77)	No response
Exact form	46.3%	6.0%	35.1%	3.9%
Right word	39.3%	5.5%	29.9%	3.9%
Word order	17.4%	6.0%	9.1%	3.9%
Pronunciation	14.4%	5.5%	6.5%	3.9%
Right turn of phrase	51.2%	6.0%	39.0%	3.9%
Intonation	26.4%	6.0%	18.2%	3.9%
	PG who had learned Irish (161)	No response	PG who had learned Irish and visited Gaeltacht (51)	No response
Exact form	38.5%	11.8%	41.2%	---
Right word	42.9%	11.8%	51.0%	---
Word order	13.7%	10.6%	11.8%	---
Pronunciation	10.6%	13.0%	13.7%	---
Right turn of phrase	46.0%	11.8%	54.9%	---
Intonation	18.6%	12.4%	11.6%	---

A similar result is arrived at if one compares the particular productive difficulties reported by all Irish learners with those reported by subjects who had experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at second level. However, in this case the PG data diverge rather less from the UG data (Table 86).

TABLE 86 Percentages of all subjects who had learned Irish reporting particular productive difficulties compared with percentages of subjects who had experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at second level reporting such difficulties.

	UG who had learned Irish (201)	No response	UG who had Irish as medium of instruction at second level (87)	No response
Exact form	46.3%	6.0%	37.9%	2.3%
Right word	39.3%	5.5%	37.9%	2.3%
Word order	17.4%	6.0%	14.9%	2.3%
Pronunciation	14.4%	5.5%	12.6%	2.3%
Right turn of phrase	51.2%	6.0%	46.0%	2.3%
Intonation	26.4%	6.0%	21.8%	2.3%

	PG who had learned Irish (161)	No response	PG who had Irish as medium of instruction at second level (59)	No response
Exact form	38.5%	11.8%	32.2%	10.2%
Right word	42.9%	11.8%	35.6%	10.2%
Word order	13.7%	10.6%	5.1%	10.2%
Pronunciation	10.6%	13.0%	8.5%	10.2%
Right turn of phrase	46.0%	11.8%	57.6%	10.2%
Intonation	18.6%	12.4%	20.3%	10.2%

A neater pattern emerges from a comparison of the particular productive difficulties of the entire set of subjects who had learned Irish with the productive difficulties of subjects whose Irish learning materals had included non-textual/audio-visual materials. The trend for proportionally fewer such difficulties to be reported by the latter group was completely consistent amongst UG subjects and disturbed by only a very slight counter-trend in just one category amongst PG subjects (Table 87). Moreover, UG and PG subjects who had used only or mainly textual learning materials consistently reported slightly more such difficulties than the generality of subjects who had learned Irish (Table 88).

TABLE 87 Percentages of all subjects who had learned Irish reporting particular productive difficulties compared with percentages of subjects whose Irish learning materials at second level had included non-textual/ audio-visual materials reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned Irish (201)	No response	UG who had used a/v materials at second level (77)	No response
Exact form	46.3%	6.0%	37.7%	6.5%
Right word	39.3%	5.5%	28.6%	6.5%
Word order	17.4%	6.0%	11.7%	6.5%
Pronunciation	14.4%	5.5%	7.8%	6.5%
Right turn of phrase	51.2%	6.0%	44.2%	6.5%
Intonation	26.4%	6.0%	16.9%	6.5%

	PG who had learned Irish (161)	No response	PG who had used a/v materials at second level (37)	No response
Exact form	38.5%	11.8%	32.4%	8.1%
Right word	42.9%	11.8%	43.2%	8.1%
Word order	13.7%	10.6%	10.8%	8.1%
Pronunciation	10.6%	13.0%	2.7%	8.1%
Right turn of phrase	46.0%	11.8%	40.5%	8.1%
Intonation	18.6%	12.4%	13.5%	8.1%

TABLE 88 Percentages of all subjects who had learned Irish reporting particular productive difficulties compared with percentages of subjects who had used only or mainly textual Irish materials at second level reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned Irish (201)	No response	UG who had used only/ mainly textual materials at second level (120)	No response
Exact form	46.3%	6.0%	50.8%	6.7%
Right word	39.3%	5.5%	45.0%	6.7%
Word order	17.4%	6.0%	20.8%	6.7%
Pronunciation	14.4%	5.5%	16.7%	6.7%
Right turn of phrase	51.2%	6.0%	55.0%	6.7%
Intonation	26.4%	6.0%	29.2%	6.7%

	PG who had learned Irish (161)	No response	PG who had used only/ mainly textual materials at second level (121)	No response
Exact form	38.5%	11.8%	39.7%	12.4%
Right word	42.9%	11.8%	43.0%	12.4%
Word order	13.7%	10.6%	14.0%	12.4%
Pronunciation	10.6%	13.0%	13.2%	12.4%
Right turn of phrase	46.0%	11.8%	48.8%	12.4%
Intonation	18.6%	12.4%	20.7%	12.4%

Chapter 3

Experience of learning French

3.1 NUMBERS (cf. Table 1, 1.1)

92.1% of UG subjects (221/240) and 90.3% of PG subjects (187/207) had learned French at some stage.

3.2 CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITUATIONS IN WHICH CONTACT WITH FRENCH WAS ESTABLISHED

3.2.1 Home (cf. Tables 2-9, 1.2.1; Table 10, 1.2.2)

Only tiny minorities of the subjects who had learned French reported it as their native language, or as the native language of their parents or partners. No UG and only one PG reported French as the native language of his/her children. Similarly, only tiny proportions claimed that French was used in their households or that their home environment was a factor in their experience of learning French. No UG and only 3 PG claimed to have started learning French before normal school age.

3.2.2 Age (cf. Table 10, 1.2.2)

A majority of subjects who had learned French reported that they had started learning French between the ages of eleven and seventeen, that is to say, during the years normally associated with second-level education: UG 69.7% (154/221), PG 58.3% (109/187). However, quite a substantial minority of subjects who had learned French reported having begun learning it in what would normally have been their primary school years (4-10): UG 21.3% (47/221), PG 13.4% (25/187). It has already been mentioned (3.2.1) that only a handful of subjects who had learned French (UG 0.0% - 0/221, PG 1.6% - 3/187) placed their first learning encounter with the language in what are normally the pre-school years. Rather more (UG 1.8% - 4/221, PG 6.4% - 12/187) claimed to have started learning the language after the age of seventeen.

3.2.3 Speech community (cf. Tables 11-19, 1.2.3)

A majority of UG subjects who had learned French (67.4% - 149/221) and just under half of PG subjects who had learned French (44.4% - 83/187) reported that they had learned it in their "own country", which for most of them meant Ireland. A substantial minority of both samples (UG 18.1% - 40/221, PG 26.7% - 50/187) reported that they had learned it both in their "own country" and in a "country where the language is native". However, only a few reported having learned French exclusively in a country where it is native (UG 4.5% - 10/221, PG 1.6% - 3/187), in a place other than such a country or their own country (UG 1.4% - 3/221, PG 2.7% - 5/187) or in combinations of situations other than the one mentioned above (UG 1.8% - 4/221, PG 3.7% - 7/187).

Nevertheless, more than half of both UG and PG subjects who had learned French claimed to have visited a French-speaking country: UG 54.8% (121/221), PG 64.2% (120/187). Data on the extent to which use of and exposure to French figured in such visits are set out in Table 89.

TABLE 89 Communicative experience in French-speaking countries of subjects who had learned French, expressed as percentages of all subjects who had learned French and visited such countries

	UG (121)	PG (120)
French spoken by them	45.5%	47.5%
French spoken to them	57.9%	51.7%
French spoken in their company	83.5%	74.2%
French and English spoken by them	38.0%	33.3%
French and English spoken to them	30.6%	36.7%
French and English spoken in their company	13.2%	14.2%

3.2.4 Factors in the learning experience (cf. Tables 20-26, 1.2.4)

With regard to the various factors which were reported by our subjects to have been operative in the language learning experience, in respect of French as of all languages other than English, those of a formal educational or cultural nature were more frequently mentioned than those of a more "personal" kind. Actually, this pattern is more pronounced in the French data than in the data for the other languages - a fact which has already been noted and discussed (cf. 1.2.4 above).

Of the formal educational and cultural factors mentioned in relation to learning French, school was predominant, being referred to by UG subjects more often than all other factors combined and by PG subjects not very markedly less often than all other factors combined (Table 90).

TABLE 90 The importance of school as compared with all other factors in subjects' experience of learning French

	UG	PG
Number of times school mentioned	195	136
Number of times other factors mentioned	162	173

A not inconsiderable minority of subjects who had learned French reported having taken it as a subject at primary school: UG 25.3% (56/221), PG 20.3% (38/187); and the vast majority of them reported having taken it at post-primary school: UG 99.1% (219/221), PG 88.8% (166/187). 7.2% of UG subjects (16/221) and 21.4% of PG subjects (40/187) who had learned French had studied it as part of a degree course; the PG showing in this context was thus markedly stronger than the UG showing. 4.5% of UG subjects (10/221) and 23.5% of PG subjects (44/187) who had learned French had learned or studied it by means of courses other than school or degree courses; the percentage of PG subjects in this category was thus again markedly higher than the percentage of UG subjects.

3.3 LEARNING FRENCH AT SCHOOL

3.3.1 French as a medium of instruction (cf. Tables 27 and 28, 1.3.1)

Most subjects who had learned French at school reported never having experienced it as a medium of instruction. Only four subjects (all PG) stated that they had been taught entirely through French at primary level, and only two (both PG) that they had been taught entirely through French at post-primary level. 7.1% of UG subjects (4/56) and 15.8% of PG subjects (6/38) who had taken French at primary school reported having had some experience of French as a medium of instruction at that level, while 23.3% of UG subjects (51/219) and 17.5% of PG subjects (29/166) who had taken French at post-primary school reported having been exposed to some teaching through the medium of French at that level.

3.3.2 Activities and materials in the French classroom (cf. Tables 29-38, 1.3.2)

With reference to the kinds of productive activities they had engaged in whilst learning French at school, both UG and PG subjects tended to mention oral work more often than written work in respect of French at primary level and less often than written work in respect of French at post-primary level, the French data in this regard being rather similar to the Irish data. References to activities of a more "mechanical" nature in respect of the learning of French at both primary and post-primary level are - as in respect of the learning of all other languages apart from English at these levels - very much more prevalent than references to activities of a more self-expressive or "creative" kind.

With regard to language learning materials, UG subjects mentioned non-textual/audio-visual materials precisely as often as purely textual materials in respect of French at primary level and more than four fifths as often as purely textual materials in respect of French at post-primary level. In PG responses references to purely textual materials consistently and clearly outstrip references to non-textual/audio-visual materials.

3.3.3 Enjoyment (cf. Tables 40 and 41, 1.3.3)

Nearly two fifths of UG subjects and more than a third of PG subjects who had taken French at primary school said that it was the language they had most enjoyed learning at that level, whilst just over a third of UG subjects and just under a fifth of PG subjects who had taken French at primary school said it was the language they had least enjoyed learning at that level. Thus a much higher proportion of UG than PG reported strong reactions to French at primary school.

Just over a third of UG subjects and just under a third of PG subjects who had taken French at post-primary school claimed that it was the language they had most enjoyed learning at that level, whereas rather less than a quarter of each sample said that it was the language they had least enjoyed learning at that level.

In its general trend this pattern of responses corresponds to what was found in respect of English, Spanish and Italian.

3.4 LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFICIENCY IN FRENCH

3.4.1 The four skills (cf. Tables 42-58, 1.4.1)

Amongst all subjects who had learned French, ability in the receptive skills (reading and understanding speech) was consistently more frequently claimed than ability in the productive skills (writing and speaking) (Table 91). This is in line with the findings for Irish, German, Spanish and Italian. Proportionally more UG than PG claimed ability in each of the four skills.

TABLE 91 Subjects' claimed ability in the four skills in French

	UG (221)	PG (187)
Understanding speech	90.0%	72.2%
Speaking	80.5%	65.2%
Reading	95.0%	74.9%
Writing	86.0%	54.6%

The data presented in Table 91 offer support for the widely held view that learners tend to perceive second langage reception as less problematic than second language production. An analysis of our subjects' difficulty rating for the four language skills (Table 92) reveals, however, that whereas amongst PG subjects writing and speaking French were indeed rated as difficult more often than understanding spoken French and reading French, in the UG data it is speaking and understanding spoken French that appear at the top of the "very hard"/"hard" table. This last finding constitutes a divergence from the general trend of results in this context and may be related to the particular perspective Anglophones seem to have on French phonology and phonetics (cf. comments on difficulties with French intonation and pronunciation, 1.4.2 and 3.4.2).

It is also interesting to note that whilst a majority of subjects who had taken French (in the case of UG subjects a very large majority) claimed ability in each of the four skills in French (Table 91), in both the UG and the PG data for French three of the four skills - writing, speaking and understanding speech - were more often placed in the "very hard"/ "hard" category than in either the "normal" or the "easy"/ "very easy" category (Tables 92 and 93).

TABLE 92 Subjects' difficulty rating for the four skills in French

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
		UG (221)		
Understanding speech	53.4%	27.2%	15.4%	4.1%
Speaking	56.6%	29.4%	10.0%	4.1%
Reading	27.6%	48.4%	19.9%	4.1%
Writing	46.2%	39.4%	10.4%	4.1%
		PG (187)		
Understanding speech	42.3%	21.9%	25.7%	10.2%
Speaking	48.7%	27.3%	15.0%	9.1%
Reading	29.9%	31.0%	30.5%	8.6%
Writing	51.3%	24.6%	13.9%	10.2%

TABLE 93 Categorization of the four skills in French according to the highest numbers of subjects' responses

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy
		UG	
Understanding speech	*		
Speaking	*		
Reading		*	
Writing	*		
		PG	
Understanding speech	*		
Speaking	*		
Reading		*	
Writing	*		

In comparison with the whole set of subjects who had learned French, those subjects who had learned French and had visited a French-speaking country tended to report difficulties with the four skills in French less frequently (Table 94).

TABLE 94 Percentages of all subjects who had learned French reporting difficulties with the four skills compared with percentages of subjects who had learned French and visited a French-speaking country reporting those difficulties

	UG who had learned French (221)	No response	UG who had learned French and visited a French-speaking country (121)	No response
Understanding speech	53.4%	4.1%	44.6%	1.7%
Speaking	56.6%	4.1%	52.1%	1.7%
Reading	27.6%	4.1%	23.1%	1.7%
Writing	46.2%	4.1%	44.6%	1.7%
	PG who had learned French (187)	No response	PG who had learned French and visited a French-speaking country (120)	No response
Understanding speech	42.3%	10.2%	30.8%	5.0%
Speaking	48.7%	9.1%	42.5%	5.0%
Reading	29.9%	8.6%	20.8%	5.0%
Writing	51.3%	10.2%	45.8%	5.0%

TABLE 95 Percentages of all subjects who had learned French reporting difficulties with the four skills compared with percentages of subjects who had experienced French as a medium of instruction at post-primary school reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned French (221)	No response	UG who had experienced French as a medium of instruction (51)	No response
Understanding speech	53.4%	4.1%	49.0%	2.0%
Speaking	56.6%	4.1%	49.0%	2.0%
Reading	27.6%	4.1%	23.5%	2.0%
Writing	46.2%	4.1%	41.2%	2.0%

	PG who had learned French (187)	No response	PG who had experienced French as a medium of instruction (29)	No response
Understanding speech	42.3%	10.2%	20.7%	6.9%
Speaking	48.7%	9.1%	31.0%	6.9%
Reading	29.9%	8.6%	17.2%	6.9%
Writing	51.3%	10.2%	37.9%	6.9%

Likewise, a comparison of the difficulties with the four skills reported by the whole set of subjects who had learned French with those reported by subjects who had experienced French as a medium of instruction at post-primary school (Table 95) reveals that such difficulties were consistently reported proportionally more frequently by the former than by the latter group.

No very clear trend emerges from a comparison of difficulties with the four skills reported by subjects whose French learning materials at post-primary level had included non-textual/audio-visual materials with those reported by the generality of subjects who had learned French (Table 96). Likewise, from a comparison between difficulties reported by subjects whose French learning materials at second level had been exclusively or mainly textual and those reported by the whole set of subjects who had learned French, there emerge two contradictory trends. PG subjects in the former category reported more difficulties, whereas UG subjects in the same category reported slightly fewer difficulties (Table 97).

TABLE 96 Percentages of all subjects who had learned French reporting difficulties with the four skills compared with percentages of subjects whose French learning materials at post-primary school had included audio-visual materials reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned French (221)	No response	UG whose French learning materials were partly a/visual (168)	No response
Understanding speech	53.4%	4.1%	52.4%	4.8%
Speaking	56.6%	4.1%	55.4%	4.8%
Reading	27.6%	4.1%	26.2%	4.8%
Writing	46.2%	4.1%%	46.4%	4.8%
	PG who had learned French (187)	No response	PG whose French learning materials were partly a/visual (107)	No response
Understanding speech	42.3%	10.2%	43.0%	3.7%
Speaking	48.7%	9.1%	52.3%	3.7%
Reading	29.9%	8.6%	26.2%	3.7%
Writing	51.3%	10.2%	45.8%	3.7%

TABLE 97 Percentages of all subjects who had learned French reporting difficulties with the four skills compared with percentages of subjects whose French learning materials at post-primary level had been exclusively or mainly textual

	UG who had learned French (221)	No response	UG whose French learning materials had been textual (48)	No response
Understanding speech	53.4%	4.1%	52.1%	---
Speaking	56.6%	4.1%	54.2%	---
Reading	27.6%	4.1%	27.1%	---
Writing	46.2%	4.1%	41.7%	---
	PG who had learned French (187)	**No response**	**PG whose French learning materials had been textual (56)**	**No response**
Understanding speech	42.3%	10.2%	46.4%	8.9%
Speaking	48.7%	9.1%	51.8%	8.9%
Reading	29.9%	8.6%	30.4%	8.9%
Writing	51.3%	10.2%	58.9%	8.9%

3.4.2 Particular productive difficulties (cf. Tables 59-73, 1.4.2)

The aspect of producing French most often characterized as "very hard"/"hard" and least often as "easy"/"very easy" by subjects who had learned French was "finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation" (Table 98), which was deemed "very hard"/"hard" by an absolute majority of subjects who had learned French (Table 99). The French data concur here in general terms with the data for all other languages mentioned by subjects (cf. Tables and discussion in 1.4.2).

Next most difficult according to our subjects seem to be "getting the right intonation" and "finding the right word" (Table 98), both of which items were categorized as "very hard"/"hard" by more subjects (UG and PG) than categorized them as either "normal" or "easy"/"very easy" (Table 99). The perceived relative difficulty of "finding the right word" corresponds fairly closely to what was found in respect of the other languages (cf. 1.4.2). Subjects' assessment of "getting the right intonation", on the other hand, is probably language-specific, and perhaps should be taken together with their assessment of "pronouncing the words properly". This last item appears consistently fourth in the "very hard"/"hard" and "normal" sections of Table 98, and more subjects from both the UG and PG groups evaluated it as "very hard"/"hard" than as "normal" or "easy"/"very easy" (Table 99). What links French pronunciation and intonation, of course, is the fact that they both relate to French phonology and phonetics, which Anglophones are commonly held to perceive as remote from English phonology and phonetics - therefore difficult - therefore especially worthy of pedagogical attention (cf. discussion of this point in 1.4.2 and subjects' rating of the oral/aural skills in French, 3.4.1).

TABLE 98 Subjects' difficulty rating for different aspects of speaking and writing French

UG
(221)

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Exact form	36.2%	40.7%	20.8%	2.3%
Right word	44.8%	42.1%	10.9%	2.3%
Word order	25.8%	50.7%	21.7%	1.8%
Pronunciation	40.3%	33.5%	24.0%	2.3%
Right turn of phrase	71.0%	23.1%	3.6%	2.3%
Intonation	48.9%	31.7%	17.2%	2.3%

PG
(187)

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Exact form	36.9%	35.3%	17.1%	10.7%
Right word	44.9%	34.8%	9.6%	10.7%
Word order	24.1%	36.9%	28.3%	10.7%
Pronunciation	37.4%	31.0%	20.9%	10.7%
Right turn of phrase	63.1%	19.3%	7.0%	10.7%
Intonation	47.6%	21.4%	20.9%	10.2%

TABLE 99 Categorization of different aspects of producing French according to the highest numbers of subjects' responses

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy
		UG	
Exact form		*	
Right word	*		
Word order		*	
Pronunciation	*		
Right turn of phrase	*		
Intonation	*		
		PG	
Exact form	*		
Right word	*		
Word order		*	
Pronunciation	*		
Right turn of phrase	*		
Intonation	*		

Consistently fifth from the top of the "very hard"/"hard" section of Table 98 is "getting the exact form right". This item appears to be more widely perceived as difficult amongst our PG subjects, more of whom categorized it as "very hard"/"hard" than as "normal" or "easy"/"very easy", than amongst our UG subjects, more of whom placed it in the "normal" category than in either of the other two (Table 99). Moreover, in the UG data this item appears third in the "easy"/"very easy" section of Table 98, whereas in the PG data it appears fourth in this same section. The fact that the difficulty rating of this item is relatively low in the French data as compared with its rating elsewhere is interpretable as a corollary of the fact that pronunciation and intonation received a particularly high difficulty rating in the French data in comparison with their rating in respect of other languages.

The item which is apparently least widely perceived as difficult amongst both UG and PG subjects is "getting the word order right", which consistently appears at the bottom of the "very hard"/"hard" section of Table 98, high in the "easy"/"very easy" section, and at the top of the "normal" section. An absolute majority of UG subjects classed this item as "normal" rather than "very hard"/"hard" or "easy"/"very easy", and more PG subjects placed it in the "normal" category than in either of the other two (Table 99). This item elicited a similar pattern of responses in respect of most of the other languages specified by our subjects.

On the whole, proportionally fewer productive difficulties were reported by subjects who had learned French and had visited a French-speaking country than by the generality of subjects who had learned French, this trend being distinctly more marked in the PG than in the UG data (Table 100).

TABLE 100 Percentages of all subjects who had learned French reporting particular productive difficulties compared with percentages of subjects who had learned French and had visited a French-speaking country reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned French (221)	No response	UG who had learned French and visited a French-speaking country (121)	No response
Exact form	36.2%	2.3%	38.0%	1.7%
Right word	44.8%	2.3%	43.8%	1.7%
Word order	25.8%	1.8%	23.1%	1.7%
Pronunciation	40.3%	2.3%	35.5%	1.7%
Right turn of phrase	71.0%	2.3%	70.2%	1.7%
Intonation	48.9%	2.3%	41.3%	1.7%
	PG who had learned French (187)	No response	PG who had learned French and visited a French-speaking country (120)	No response
Exact form	36.9%	10.7%	31.7%	9.2%
Right word	44.9%	10.7%	40.0%	9.2%
Word order	24.1%	10.7%	21.7%	9.2%
Pronunciation	37.4%	10.7%	29.2%	9.2%
Right turn of phrase	63.1%	10.7%	55.8%	9.2%
Intonation	47.6%	10.2%	36.7%	9.2%

TABLE 101 Percentages of all subjects who had learned French reporting productive difficulties compared with percentages of subjects who had experienced French as a medium of instruction at second level reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned French (221)	No response	UG who had experienced French as a medium of instruction (51)	No response
Exact form	36.2%	2.3%	27.5%	21.6%
Right word	44.8%	2.3%	45.1%	21.6%
Word order	25.8%	1.8%	23.5%	21.6%
Pronunciation	40.3%	2.3%	33.3%	21.6%
Right turn of phrase	71.0%	2.3%	72.6%	21.6%
Intonation	48.9%	2.3%	41.2%	21.6%
	PG who had learned French (187)	No response	PG who had experienced French as a medium of instruction (29)	No response
Exact form	36.9%	10.7%	41.4%	37.9%
Right word	44.9%	10.7%	37.9%	37.9%
Word order	24.1%	10.7%	10.3%	37.9%
Pronunciation	37.4%	10.7%	34.5%	37.9%
Right turn of phrase	63.1%	10.7%	62.1%	37.9%
Intonation	47.6%	10.2%	41.4%	37.9%

A similar trend emerges if one compares the productive difficulties reported by all subjects who had learned French with those reported by subjects who had experienced French as a medium of instruction at second level. The latter group reported proportionally fewer difficulties in respect of most aspects of producing French (Table 101).

No particularly clear picture emerges from a comparison of productive difficulties reported by all subjects who had learned French with those reported by learners who had been exposed to non-textual/audio-visual materials at post-primary level. However, to the extent that a trend is discernible it is for this latter group to report proportionally fewer difficulties in respect of most items (Table 102).

TABLE 102 Percentages of all subjects who had learned French reporting particular productive difficulties compared with percentages of subjects whose French learning materials at post-primary level had included non-textual/audio-visual materials

	UG who had learned French (221)	No response	UG who had used a/v learning materials (168)	No response
Exact form	36.2%	2.3%	37.5%	24.4%
Right word	44.8%	2.3%	44.6%	24.4%
Word order	25.8%	1.8%	28.0%	24.4%
Pronunciation	40.3%	2.3%	37.5%	24.4%
Right turn of phrase	71.0%	2.3%	69.1%	24.4%
Intonation	48.9%	2.3%	46.4%	24.4%
	PG who had learned French (187)	No response	PG who had used a/v learning materials (107)	No response
Exact form	36.9%	10.7%	35.5%	6.5%
Right word	44.9%	10.7%	43.0%	6.5%
Word order	24.1%	10.7%	39.3%	6.5%
Pronunciation	37.4%	10.7%	38.3%	6.5%
Right turn of phrase	63.1%	10.7%	59.8%	6.5%
Intonation	47.6%	10.2%	44.9%	6.5%

Inconsistencies also become manifest when one compares the productive difficulties reported by all subjects who had learned French with those reported by subjects who had used exclusively or mainly textual French learning materials at post-primary school. However, in respect of three aspects of production as far as the UG data are concerned and all aspects of production as far as the PG data are concerned, the latter group tended to report proportionally more difficulties (Table 103).

TABLE 103 Percentages of all subjects who had learned French reporting particular productive difficulties compared with percentages of subjects who had used exclusively or mainly textual French learning materials at post-primary school reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned French (221)	No response	UG who had used only or mainly textual learning materials (48)	No response
Exact form	36.2%	2.3%	31.3%	6.3%
Right word	44.8%	2.3%	41.7%	6.3%
Word order	25.8%	1.8%	10.4%	6.3%
Pronunciation	40.3%	2.3%	41.7%	6.3%
Right turn of phrase	71.0%	2.3%	75.0%	6.3%
Intonation	48.9%	2.3%	68.8%	6.3%

	PG who had learned French (187)	No response	PG who had used only or mainly textual learning materials (57)	No response
Exact form	36.9%	10.7%	37.5%	12.5%
Right word	44.9%	10.7%	50.0%	12.5%
Word order	24.1%	10.7%	25.0%	12.5%
Pronunciation	37.4%	10.7%	39.3%	12.5%
Right turn of phrase	63.1%	10.7%	69.6%	12.5%
Intonation	47.6%	10.2%	51.8%	12.5%

Chapter 4

Experience of learning German

4.1 NUMBERS (cf. Table 1, 1.1)

35.8% of UG subjects (86/240) and 35.8% of PG subjects (74/207) had learned German at some stage.

4.2 CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITUATIONS IN WHICH CONTACT WITH GERMAN WAS ESTABLISHED

4.2.1 Home (cf. Tables 2-9, 1.2.1, Table 10, 1.2.2)

Only tiny proportions of subjects who had learned German claimed that it was their first language or the first language of their parents. No PG and only one UG claimed that German was his/her partner's first language, and no subjects reported German as their children's first language. Only two subjects (both PG) reported that German was used in their household, and only handfuls of subjects claimed that their home environment was a factor in their experience of learning German or that they had started learning German before normal school age.

4.2.2 Age (cf. Table 10, 1.2.2)

Consistently more subjects who had learned German reported having begun learning the language between the ages of eleven and seventeen - that is during the normal post-primary school years - than either earlier or later: UG 44.2% (38/86), PG 35.1% (26/74). Only 4.7% of UG subjects (4/86) and 2.7% of PG subjects (2/74) who had learned German claimed to have begun learning German before the age of four, and only 2.3% of UG subjects (2/86) and no PG subjects who had learned German claimed to have started learning it during the normal primary school years - i.e. between four and ten years. However, quite a sizeable minority of both groups reported that they had started learning the language after the age of seventeen: UG 24.4% (21/86), PG 32.4% (24/74).

4.2.3 Speech community (cf. Tables 11-19, 1.2.3)

Just under two fifths of both UG (39.5% - 34/86) and PG (39.2% - 29/74) who had learned German reported having learned it in their "own country" - that is, for the vast majority of them, Ireland. Quite substantial percentages claimed to have learned German in a "country where the language is native" (UG 20.9% - 18/86; PG 12.2% - 9/74) and in such a country as well as in their "own country" (UG 15.1% - 13/86; PG 18.9% - 14/74). Only tiny percentages (UG 1.2% - 1/86, PG 2.7% - 2/74) reported having learned German in a place other than their "own country" or a "country where the language is native", and references to combinations of places other than the one mentioned above figure not at all in the UG data and only barely in the PG data (1.4% - 1/74).

More than half of both the UG and PG subjects who had learned German had visited a German-speaking country at some stage: UG 54.7% (47/86), PG 64.9% (48/74). The communicative experience of German these subjects reported having had during such visits is summarized in Table 104.

TABLE 104 Communicative experience in German-speaking countries of subjects who had learned German, expressed as proportions of all subjects who had learned German and visited such countries

	UG (47)	PG (48)
German spoken by them	0.34	0.38
German spoken to them	0.38	0.44
German spoken in their company	0.79	0.65
German and English spoken by them	0.47	0.27
German and English spoken to them	0.47	0.29
German and English spoken in their company	0.17	0.13

4.2.4 Factors in the learning experience (cf. Tables 20-26, 1.2.4)

The German data, like those for all other languages apart from English, show a distinct and consistent preponderance of references to formal educational and cultural factors over references to "personal" factors in subjects' reports on the factors which played a role in their language learning experience. The degree of this preponderance in respect of German is roughly in line with what was found in respect of Irish and Spanish.

School was the most prominent of all the various factors mentioned by both UG and PG subjects. Although it certainly does not feature so strongly as a learning factor in the German data as in the French and Irish data, it was mentioned here more often than any other single factor - more than half as often as all other factors combined in the UG data and about two fifths as often as all other factors combined in the PG data (Table 105).

TABLE 105 The importance of school as compared with all other factors in subjects' experience of learning German

	UG	PG
Number of times school was mentioned	39	30
Number of times other factors mentioned	64	74

Only tiny minorities of subjects who had learned German (UG 4.7% - 4/86, PG 2.7% - 2/74) reported having taken it as a subject at primary school. A majority of UG subjects and more than two fifths of PG subjects who had learned German had taken it at post-primary school: UG 60.5% (52/86), PG 43.2% (32/74). The percentage of PG subjects with a knowledge of German who had studied it at degree course level (14.9% - 11/74) was more than double that of the UG subjects in this category (7.0% - 6/86). As far as courses other than school and degree courses are concerned, whereas more than half the PG subjects who had learned German had learned or studied it by means of such courses (51.4% - 38/74), only 15.1% (13/86) of UG subjects with a knowledge of German had made use of such courses.

4.3 LEARNING GERMAN AT SCHOOL

4.3.1 German as a medium of instruction (cf. Tables 27 and 28, 1.3.1)

Of the four UG and two PG subjects who had taken German at primary school, all reported having been taught through it at that level. On the other hand, of the much larger numbers of UG and PG subjects who had taken German at post-primary school, only about a sixth of each sample claimed to have experienced German as a medium of instruction at that level: UG 17.3% (9/52), PG 15.6% (5/32).

4.3.2 Activities and learning materials in the German class (cf. Tables 29-38, 1.3.2)

With regard to productive activities associated with learning German, subjects who had taken German at school tended to mention oral work and written work in approximately equal proportions in respect of primary level and written work somewhat more often than oral work in respect of post-primary level. The results for German are in this respect comparable to those for Spanish and, with regard to post-primary level experience, Italian. In the German data - as in the data for all other languages apart from English - references to "mechanical" language learning activities consistently and markedly outweigh references to more self-expressive or "creative" activities.

As far as learning materials are concerned, references to purely textual materials here as elsewhere generally predominate over references to non-textual/audio-visual materials. Exceptional in this regard are the UG data in respect of primary level German, where references to non-textual and to textual materials occur in equal numbers. The preponderance of references to purely textual materials in the PG data is more consistent and more pronounced.

4.3.3 Enjoyment (cf. Tables 40 and 41, 1.3.3)

Three of the four UG subjects who had taken German at primary level said that German was the language they had most enjoyed learning at that level, and none of the four said it was the language he/she had least enjoyed at that level. No strong reactions either way were reported by PG subjects in respect of German at primary level.

Reactions to German at second level were remarkably balanced. 23.1% of UG (12/52) and 21.9% of PG subjects (7/32) who had taken German at post-primary school stated that German was the language they had most enjoyed at that level, and similar percentages of both groups (UG 23.1% - 12/52, PG 25.0% - 8/32) stated that it was the language they had least enjoyed at that level.

The German data therefore show no clear preponderance of "enjoyed most" responses. These data thus stand between the English, French, Spanish and Italian data on the one hand, with their more marked preponderance of "enjoyed most" responses, and the Irish data on the other hand, with their preponderance of "enjoyed least" responses.

4.4 LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFICIENCY IN GERMAN

4.4.1 The four skills (cf. Tables 42-58, 1.4.1)

As Table 106 indicates, subjects who had learned German were relatively modest in their claims as to what they could do in the language. On the whole PG subjects tended to make fewer claims than UG subjects. In respect of German as of Irish, French, Spanish and Italian, greater proportions of both UG and PG subjects claimed ability in the receptive skills (reading and understanding speech) than in the productive skills (writing and speaking).

TABLE 106 Subjects' claimed ability in the four skills in German

	UG (86)	PG (74)
Understanding speech	70.9%	54.1%
Speaking	64.0%	47.3%
Reading	65.1%	66.2%
Writing	48.8%	32.4%

TABLE 107 Subjects' difficulty rating for the four skills in German

UG (86)

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Understanding speech	44.2%	26.7%	14.0%	15.1%
Speaking	53.5%	19.8%	11.6%	15.1%
Reading	54.7%	18.6%	11.6%	15.1%
Writing	66.3%	11.6%	7.0%	15.1%

PG (74)

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Understanding speech	50.0%	18.9%	17.6%	13.5%
Speaking	55.4%	13.5%	17.6%	13.5%
Reading	50.0%	18.9%	17.6%	13.5%
Writing	67.6%	6.8%	12.2%	13.5%

With regard to subjects' reported difficulties with the four skills in German (Tables 107 and 108), of the four, writing was most often categorized as "very hard"/"hard" and least often as "normal" or "easy"/"very easy" by both UG and PG subjects. At the other end of the scale, understanding speech consistently appears at the top of the "easy"/"very easy" and "normal" sections of Table 107 and at the bottom of the "very hard"/"hard" section. UG and PG subjects differed in their assessment of reading and speaking. In the UG data reading and speaking appear respectively second and third in the "very hard"/ "hard" section of Table 107, third and second in the "normal" section, and equal second in the "easy"/"very easy" section. In the PG data, on the other hand, the positions of these two skills is reversed in the "very hard"/"hard" and "normal" sections of Table 107, although in the "easy"/"very easy" section they again came equal second.

TABLE 108 Categorization of the four skills in German according to the highest numbers of subjects' responses

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy
		UG	
Understanding speech	*		
Speaking	*		
Reading	*		
Writing	*		
		PG	
Understanding speech	*		
Speaking	*		
Reading	*		
Writing	*		

In other words, whereas in the PG data the productive skills were more often rated as problematic than the receptive skills, which is in line with other findings and accords with what one would expect (cf. 1.4.1 and discussion in 2.4.1 and 3.4.1), in the UG data it was productive and receptive aspects of dealing with the written language which elicited most "very hard"/"hard" responses. Given the indications that UG subjects' experience of learning German was more typically school-based than that of PG subjects (cf. 4.2.2, 4.2.4), one is tempted to conclude that the explanation for this divergent trend in the UG data lies in a particular pedagogical preoccupation with the written forms of the language.

The most striking feature of the findings presented in Tables 107 and 108 is one which is common to both UG and PG data. UG and PG subjects were at one in categorizing all four skills in German as "very hard"/"hard" more often than as "normal" or "easy"/"very easy".

In comparison with the whole set of subjects who had learned German, those subjects who had learned German and had visited a German-speaking country consistently reported fewer difficulties with speaking German and understanding spoken German. On the other hand, these latter consistently reported more difficulties with writing German. UG subjects in the latter group also reported more difficulties with regard to reading the language, whereas the PG data show no trend either way (Table 109).

TABLE 109 Percentages of all subjects who had learned German reporting difficulties with the four skills compared with percentages of subjects who had learned German and had visited a German-speaking country reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned German (86)	No response	UG who had learned German and visited a German-speaking country (47)	No response
Understanding speech	44.2%	15.1%	40.4%	6.4%
Speaking	53.5%	15.1%	44.7%	6.4%
Reading	54.7%	15.1%	59.6%	6.4%
Writing	66.3%	15.1%	70.2%	6.4%

	PG who had learned German (74)	No response	PG who had learned German and visited a German-speaking country (48)	No response
Understanding speech	50.0%	13.5%	47.9%	4.2%
Speaking	55.4%	13.5%	54.2%	4.2%
Reading	50.0%	13.5%	50.0%	4.2%
Writing	67.6%	13.5%	70.8%	4.2%

With regard to the evidence bearing on the possible effects of the experience of German as a medium of instruction at second level, PG who had had German as a medium of instruction at second level reported on the whole proportionally more, and UG in this category proportionally fewer difficulties with the four skills in German than the generality of PG and UG who had learned German (Table 110). However, it would probably be advisable to treat these findings with caution, given the very small numbers of subjects who had experienced German as a medium of instruction and the very high "no response" rates in respect of this question.

TABLE 110 Percentages of all subjects who had learned German reporting difficulties with the four skills compared with percentages of subjects who had experienced German as a medium of instruction at post-primary school reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned German (86)	No response	UG who had German as a medium of instruction (9)	No response
Understanding speech	44.2%	15.1%	33.3%	33.3%
Speaking	53.5%	15.1%	33.3%	33.3%
Reading	54.7%	15.1%	22.2%	33.3%
Writing	66.3%	15.1%	44.4%	33.3%
	PG who had learned German (74)	No response	PG who had German as a medium of instruction (5)	No response
Understanding speech	50.0%	13.5%	60.0%	40.0%
Speaking	55.4%	13.5%	60.0%	40.0%
Reading	50.0%	13.5%	60.0%	40.0%
Writing	67.6%	13.5%	60.0%	40.0%

The evidence regarding German learning materials in this context is also contradictory (Tables 111 and 112). On the one hand, there is a trend for proportionally fewer difficulties with reading and writing in German to be reported by subjects whose German learning materials at second level had included non-textual/audio-visual materials than by the generality of subjects who had learned German. On the other hand, this same trend emerges, in this case for all four skills, in respect of subjects who had used mainly or exclusively textual German learning materials at second level. It should be noted once again that one is dealing here with relatively small sub-groups and, in seven of the eight sets of figures, relatively high "no response" rates.

TABLE 111 Percentages of all subjects who had learned German reporting difficulties with the four skills compared with percentages of subjects whose German learning materials at second level had included non-textual/audio-visual materials

	UG who had learned German (86)	No response	UG whose learning materials included a/visual materials (29)	No response
Understanding speech	44.2%	15.1%	51.7%	17.2%
Speaking	53.5%	15.1%	62.1%	17.2%
Reading	54.7%	15.1%	44.8%	17.2%
Writing	66.3%	15.1%	34.5%	17.2%

	PG who had learned German (74)	No response	PG whose learning materials included a/visual materials (17)	No response
Understanding speech	50.0%	13.5%	41.2%	---
Speaking	55.4%	13.5%	58.8%	---
Reading	50.0%	13.5%	41.2%	---
Writing	67.6%	13.5%	64.7%	---

TABLE 112 Percentages of all subjects who had learned German reporting difficulties with the four skills compared with percentages of subjects whose German learning materials at second level were exclusively or mainly textual

	UG who had learned German (86)	No response	UG whose learning materials were only/ mainly textual (19)	No response
Understanding speech	44.2%	15.1%	36.8%	15.8%
Speaking	53.5%	15.1%	47.4%	15.8%
Reading	54.7%	15.1%	36.8%	15.8%
Writing	66.3%	15.1%	42.1%	15.8%
	PG who had learned German (74)	No response	PG whose learning materials were only/ mainly textual (18)	No response
Understanding speech	50.0%	13.5%	38.9%	27.8%
Speaking	55.4%	13.5%	38.9%	27.8%
Reading	50.0%	13.5%	33.3%	27.8%
Writing	67.6%	13.5%	55.6%	27.8%

4.4.2 Particular productive difficulties (cf. Tables 59-73, 1.4.2)

The German data concur with data for other languages in regard to the aspect of production most often characterized by subjects as "very hard"/"hard" and least often as "normal" or "easy"/"very easy" (Table 113). The item in question - "finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation" - was classed as "very hard"/"hard" by an absolute majority of both UG and PG subjects who had learned German (Table 114; cf. Tables and discussion in 1.4.2).

Consistently second from the top of the "very hard"/"hard" section of Table 113 and near the bottom of the "normal" and "easy"/"very easy" sections is "getting the exact form right". Like "finding the right turn of phrase", this item was classed as "very hard"/"hard" by an absolute majority of both UG and PG subjects (Table 114). Again, this finding fits in with a general language-independent pattern of responses in respect of this item (cf. 1.4.2).

TABLE 113 Subjects' difficulty rating for different aspects of speaking and writing German

UG (86)

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Exact form	55.8%	18.6%	4.7%	20.9%
Right word	50.0%	24.4%	4.7%	20.9%
Word order	51.2%	20.9%	7.0%	20.9%
Pronunciation	22.1%	27.9%	29.1%	20.9%
Right turn of phrase	62.8%	15.1%	1.2%	20.9%
Intonation	33.7%	31.4%	14.0%	20.9%

PG (74)

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Exact form	55.4%	17.6%	9.5%	17.6%
Right word	54.1%	20.3%	8.1%	17.6%
Word order	48.6%	20.3%	13.5%	17.6%
Pronunciation	13.5%	29.7%	39.2%	17.6%
Right turn of phrase	59.5%	17.6%	5.4%	17.6%
Intonation	23.0%	29.7%	29.7%	17.6%

TABLE 114 Categorization of different aspects of German according to the highest numbers of subjects' responses

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy
		UG	
Exact form	*		
Right word	*		
Word order	*		
Pronunciation			*
Right turn of phrase	*		
Intonation	*		
		PG	
Exact form	*		
Right word	*		
Word order	*		
Pronunciation			*
Right turn of phrase	*		
Intonation		**	

"Finding the right word" and "getting the word order right" tend to appear around the middle of the "very hard"/"hard" section, the "normal" section and the "easy"/"very easy" section of Table 113 - although it should be noted that both these items were very markedly more often categorized as "very hard"/"hard" than as "normal" or "easy"/"very easy" by both UG and PG subjects (Table 114). The perceived difficulty of "finding the right word" is apparently language-independent (cf. 1.4.2). That of "getting the word order right", on the other hand, can plausibly be attributed to the fact that German word order is in many respects rather different from English word order, and that it has therefore traditionally attracted a good deal of attention from Anglophone teachers and learners of German (cf. discussion in 1.4.2)

At the bottom of the "very hard"/"hard" section of Table 113 we find "getting the right intonation" and "pronouncing the words properly" - in that order. These items also appear, in reverse order, at the top of the "easy"/"very easy" section of the table. In addition, both figure at the top of the "normal" section. "Getting the right intonation" was classed more often as "normal" or as "easy"/"very easy" than as "very hard"/"hard" by PG, but more often as "very hard"/"hard" by UG (Table 114). "Pronouncing the words properly", on the other hand, was more often categorized as "easy"/"very easy" than as "normal" or "very hard"/ "hard" by both UG and PG subjects (Table 114). These results are in line with the general tendency (from which only the French data diverge) for subjects to rate phonetic/ phonological aspects of the languages they know as difficult less often than most other aspects of those languages (cf. 1.4.2).

No very clear picture emerges from a comparison of productive difficulties reported by the whole set of subjects who had learned German with those reported by subjects who had learned German and had visited a German-speaking country (Table 115). It is true that UG subjects in the latter category tended to report proportionally fewer difficulties. However, the trend which emerges from the PG data in this context runs in the opposite direction except in respect of pronunciation.

TABLE 115 Percentages of all subjects who had learned German reporting particular productive difficulties compared with percentages of subjects who had learned German and had visited a German-speaking country reporting such problems

	UG who had learned German (86)	No response	UG who had learned German and visited a German-speaking country (47)	No response
Exact form	55.8%	20.9%	55.3%	19.1%
Right word	50.0%	20.9%	44.7%	19.1%
Word order	51.2%	20.9%	48.9%	19.1%
Pronunciation	22.1%	20.9%	12.8%	19.1%
Right turn of phrase	62.8%	20.9%	63.8%	19.1%
Intonation	33.7%	20.9%	29.8%	19.1%
	PG who had learned German (74)	No response	PG who had learned German and visited a German-speaking country (48)	No response
Exact form	55.4%	17.6%	60.4%	6.3%
Right word	54.1%	17.6%	54.2%	6.3%
Word order	48.6%	17.6%	54.2%	6.3%
Pronunciation	13.5%	17.6%	12.5%	6.3%
Right turn of phrase	59.5%	17.6%	64.6%	6.3%
Intonation	23.0%	17.6%	25.0%	6.3%

TABLE 116 Percentages of all subjects who had learned German reporting particular productive difficulties compared with percentages of subjects who had experienced German as a medium of instruction at second level reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned German (86)	No response	UG who had German as a medium of instruction (9)	No response
Exact form	55.8%	20.9%	22.2%	33.3%
Right word	50.0%	20.9%	33.3%	33.3%
Word order	51.2%	20.9%	22.2%	33.3%
Pronunciation	22.1%	20.9%	11.1%	33.3%
Right turn of phrase	62.8%	20.9%	44.4%	33.3%
Intonation	33.7%	20.9%	33.3%	33.3%
	PG who had learned (74)	No response	PG who had German as a medium of instruction (5)	No response
Exact form	55.4%	17.6%	60.0%	40.0%
Right word	54.1%	17.6%	20.0%	40.0%
Word order	48.6%	17.6%	40.0%	40.0%
Pronunciation	13.5%	17.6%	---	40.0%
Right turn of phrase	59.5%	17.6%	40.0%	40.0%
Intonation	23.0%	17.6%	---	40.0%

The trend which emerges from a comparison of the productive difficulties reported by all subjects who had learned German with those reported by subjects who had experienced German as a medium of instruction at post-primary school is for proportionally fewer difficulties to be reported by the latter group. This trend is almost completely consistent, with just one area of the PG data not conforming to it (Table 116). One notes, however, the very small numbers of subjects in the latter category and the high "no response" rates throughout.

TABLE 117 Percentages of all subjects who had learned German reporting particular productive difficulties compared with percentages of subjects whose German learning materials at second level had included non-textual/audio-visual materials reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned German (86)	No response	UG who had used a/v materials (29)	No response
Exact form	55.8%	20.9%	51.7%	17.2%
Right word	50.0%	20.9%	44.8%	17.2%
Word order	51.2%	20.9%	55.2%	17.2%
Pronunciation	22.1%	20.9%	24.1%	17.2%
Right turn of phrase	62.8%	20.9%	69.0%	17.2%
Intonation	33.7%	20.9%	34.5%	17.2%

	PG who had learned German (74)	No response	PG who had used a/v materials (17)	No response
Exact form	55.4%	17.6%	64.7%	---
Right word	54.1%	17.6%	58.8%	---
Word order	48.6%	17.6%	52.9%	---
Pronunciation	13.5%	17.6%	23.5%	---
Right turn of phrase	59.5%	17.6%	70.6%	---
Intonation	23.0%	17.6%	23.5%	---

TABLE 118 Percentages of all subjects who had learned German reporting particular productive difficulties compared with percentages of subjects whose German learning materials at second level had been mainly textual reporting such problems

	UG who had learned German (86)	No response	UG who had used only/ mainly textual materials (19)	No response
Exact form	55.8%	20.9%	52.6%	15.8%
Right word	50.0%	20.9%	36.8%	15.8%
Word order	51.2%	20.9%	47.4%	15.8%
Pronunciation	22.1%	20.9%	15.8%	15.8%
Right turn of phrase	62.8%	20.9%	52.6%	15.8%
Intonation	33.7%	20.9%	31.6%	15.8%
	PG who had learned German (74)	No response	PG who had used only/ mainly textual materials (18)	No response
Exact form	55.4%	17.6%	50.0%	22.2%
Right word	54.1%	17.6%	44.4%	22.2%
Word order	48.6%	17.6%	44.4%	22.2%
Pronunciation	13.5%	17.6%	16.7%	22.2%
Right turn of phrase	59.5%	17.6%	55.6%	22.2%
Intonation	23.0%	17.6%	16.7%	22.2%

UG subjects who had used a variety of German learning materials at second level, including non-textual/audio-visual materials, reported proportionally more difficulties with word order, pronunciation, getting the right turn of phrase and intonation than the generality of UG subjects who had learned German; PG subjects who had used such materials consistently reported more productive difficulties than the generality of PG subjects who had learned German. UG subjects who had been exposed exclusively or mainly to textual materials at second level consistently reported fewer productive difficulties than the generality of UG subjects who had learned German. PG subjects who had used only or mainly textual materials at second level also reported fewer difficulties except in respect of pronunciation (Tables 117 and 118).

Chapter 5

Experience of learning Spanish

In this chapter there are no tables equivalent to Tables 80 and 86 in Chapter 2, Tables 95 and 101 in Chapter 3, and Tables 110 and 116 in Chapter 4. The reason for this is the smallness of the relevant sub-groups for Spanish.

5.1 NUMBERS (cf. Table 1, 1.1)

15.4% of UG (37/240) and 19.8% of PG subjects (41/207) had learned Spanish at some stage.

5.2 CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITUATIONS IN WHICH CONTACT WITH SPANISH WAS ESTABLISHED

5.2.1 Home (cf. Tables 2-9, 1.2.1; Table 10, 1.2.2)

No subject claimed that Spanish was his/her sole first language, although two PG claimed that they had learned Spanish and English simultaneously as their first languages. Only one subject (PG) claimed that his/her mother's native language was Spanish, and only one (UG) reported that his/her partner was a native speaker of Spanish (and English). No subjects claimed that their fathers or children were native speakers of Spanish. Only one (PG) reported that Spanish was spoken in his/her household, only two (both PG) stated that their home environment had been a factor in their experience of learning Spanish, and only one (PG) claimed that he/she had started learning Spanish before normal school age.

5.2.2 Age (cf. Table 10, 1.2.2)

Of both UG and PG subjects who had learned Spanish, more reported having begun learning the language between the ages of eleven and seventeen, that is during the normal post-primary school years, than either earlier or later: UG 0.43 (16/37), PG 0.37 (15/41). Only one subject (0.02) of the 41 PG who had learned Spanish claimed to have started learning it before the age of four; and only two (0.05) of the 37 UG who had learned Spanish claimed to have started learning it between four and ten years. As far as subjects beginning Spanish after the age of seventeen are concerned, of the 37 UG subjects who had learned Spanish there was only one in this category (0.03). However, about one fifth (0.22 - 9/41) of PG subjects who had learned Spanish reported having started learning the language after the age of seventeen.

5.2.3 Speech community (cf. Tables 11-19, 1.2.3)

About two fifths of UG subjects (0.43 - 16/37) and about one fifth of PG subjects (0.22 - 9/41) who had learned Spanish reported having learned the language in their "own country" - in other words, for most of them, Ireland. 0.08 of UG (3/37) and 0.1 of PG subjects (4/41) claimed to have learned it in a "country where the language is native". None of the UG subjects and only one of the 41 PG subjects (0.02) who had learned Spanish reported having learned it in a place other than his/her "own country" or a "country where the language is native". Whereas only one of the 37 UG subjects (0.03) who had learned Spanish claimed to have learned it in a "country where the language is native" as well as in his/her "own country", well over a quarter (0.29) of 41 PG subjects who had learned Spanish made such a claim. Two further of the 41 PG subjects who had learned Spanish (0.05) reported having learned it in their "own country", a "country where the language is native", and "another place".

Over half of both the UG and PG subjects who had learned Spanish claimed to have visited a Spanish-speaking country at some stage: UG 0.54 (20/37), PG 0.66 (27/41). The reports of these subjects on their use of and exposure to Spanish during such visits is summarized in Table 119.

TABLE 119 Communicative experience in Spanish-speaking countries of subjects who had learned Spanish, expressed as proportions of all subjects who had learned Spanish and visited such countries

	UG (21)	PG (26)
Spanish spoken by them	0.43	0.42
Spanish spoken to them	0.57	0.42
Spanish spoken in their company	0.86	0.65
Spanish and English spoken by them	0.29	0.31
Spanish and English spoken to them	0.24	0.42
Spanish and English spoken in their company	0.14	0.23

5.2.4 Factors in the learning experience (cf. Tables 20-26, 1.2.4)

In relation to the learning of Spanish, as in relation to the learning of other languages apart from English, there is a preponderance of references to formal educational and cultural factors over references to personal contacts and relationships in subjects' reports on factors in the language learning experience. This preponderance is of roughly the same order as that which emerges from the Irish and German data.

Of all factors, the single most frequently mentioned in respect of Spanish was school (Table 120). In the UG data school was referred to as often as all other factors combined, which approximately corresponds to the trend discernible in the data for Irish and French. In the PG Spanish data school was mentioned about a third as often as all other factors combined, which tends more in the direction of the pattern for German and Italian.

TABLE 120 The importance of school as compared with all other factors in subjects' experience of learning Spanish

	UG	PG
Number of times school mentioned	18	15
Number of times other factors mentioned	18	43

Only 0.11 of UG (4/37) and 0.07 of PG subjects (3/41) who had learned Spanish reported having taken Spanish at primary school. A clear majority of both UG and PG who had learned Spanish, on the other hand, said they had taken it as a subject at post-primary school: UG 0.76 (28/37), PG 0.63 (26/41). Similar proportions of UG and PG subjects claimed to have studied the language as part of a degree course: UG 0.16 (6/37), PG 0.15 (6/41); this diverges from the tendency discernible in the English, Irish, French, and German data for proportionally more PG than UG to fall into this category. With regard to subjects with a knowledge of Spanish who reported having learned or studied it by means of a course other than a school or degree course, the proportion of PG subjects in this category (0.15 - 6/41) was nearly twice as high as the proportion of UG subjects (0.08 - 3/37).

5.3 LEARNING SPANISH AT SCHOOL

5.3.1 Spanish as a medium of instruction (cf. Tables 27 and 28, 1.3.1)

One of the four UG subjects and two of the three PG subjects who reported having taken Spanish at primary school said they had experienced Spanish as a medium of instruction at that level.

Of those who reported having taken Spanish at post-primary school, the proportion of PG subjects claiming to have experienced some teaching through Spanish (0.23 - 6/26) was markedly higher than the proportion of UG subjects making the same claim (0.11 - 3/28).

5.3.2 Activities and learning materials in the Spanish class (cf. Tables 29-38, 1.3.2)

Subjects who had taken Spanish at primary school tended to mention oral productive activities about as often as written productive activities. In respect of Spanish at second level, productive written activities were mentioned more often than productive oral activities. These results correspond roughly to what was found for German. References to "mechanical" language learning activities in the Spanish data - as elsewhere apart from in the English data - consistently predominate over references to more self-expressive or "creative" activities.

With regard to language learning materials, the Spanish findings do not wholly conform to the general tendency for references to textual materials to predominate. Whilst references to textual materials do outweigh references to non-textual/audio-visual materials in the UG data concerning Spanish at first level and in the PG data concerning Spanish at second level, in the PG data on Spanish at first level and in the UG data on Spanish at second level it is the references to non-textual materials which are preponderant.

5.3.3 Enjoyment (cf. Tables 40 and 41, 1.3.3)

Of the four UG subjects who had taken Spanish at primary school, one said it was the language he/she had most enjoyed at that level and none said Spanish [illegible] the language least enjoyed. Of the three PG subjects who had taken Spanish at primary school two said Spanish was [illegible] language they had most enjoyed at that level and none said it [illegible] the language least enjoyed.

UG reactions to Spanish at second level were more balanced. Eight of the 28 subjects who had taken Spanish at post-primary school (0.29) said that it was the language they had enjoyed most at that level, whilst seven of them (0.25) said it was the language they had enjoyed least at that level. PG reactions in this context, on the other hand, tended markedly in the "most enjoyed" direction. Whereas ten of the 26 PG subjects who had taken Spanish at post-primary school (0.39) reported that it was the language they had enjoyed most at that level, only three of them (0.12) reported that it was the language they had enjoyed least.

The findings for Spanish with regard to enjoyment of the language as a school subject are thus broadly similar to those for English, French and Italian, insofar as "most enjoyed" responses generally outweigh "least enjoyed" responses.

5.4 LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFICIENCY IN SPANISH

5.4.1 The four skills (cf. Tables 42-58, 1.4.1)

Claims made in respect of subjects' ability in the four language skills in Spanish (Table 121) were, like similar claims made in respect of German, relatively modest in level. As in the case of Irish, French, German and Italian, fewer claims were made in respect of the productive skills (writing and speaking) than in respect of the receptive skills (reading and understanding speech). UG subjects tended to be more confident than PG subjects in the claims they made in respect of writing and understanding speech, but less confident than PG subjects in their claims concerning reading and speaking.

TABLE 121 Subjects' claimed ability in the four skills in Spanish

	UG (37)	PG (41)
Understanding speech	0.70	0.68
Speaking	0.54	0.56
Reading	0.62	0.78
Writing	0.54	0.49

As far as subjects' difficulty rating for the four skills in Spanish is concerned (Tables 122 and 123), in both the UG and the PG data the productive skills were consistently more often classed as "very hard"/"hard" and less often classed as "normal" than the receptive skills. UG subjects categorized all four skills as "very hard"/"hard" more often than as "normal" or "easy"/"very easy". PG subjects did the same with writing, speaking and understanding speech, but categorized reading as "normal" more often than as "very hard"/"hard" or "easy"/"very easy".

TABLE 122 Subjects' difficulty rating for the four skills in Spanish

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
		UG (37)		
Understanding speech	0.41	0.32	0.11	0.16
Speaking	0.57	0.19	0.08	0.16
Reading	0.38	0.30	0.16	0.16
Writing	0.51	0.14	0.19	0.16
		PG (41)		
Understanding speech	0.42	0.27	0.22	0.10
Speaking	0.46	0.20	0.24	0.10
Reading	0.27	0.32	0.29	0.12
Writing	0.54	0.20	0.15	0.12

TABLE 123 Categorization of the four skills in Spanish according to highest numbers of subjects' responses

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy
		UG	
Understanding speech	*		
Speaking	*		
Reading	*		
Writing	*		
		PG	
Understanding speech	*		
Speaking	*		
Reading		*	
Writing	*		

Of subjects who had learned Spanish, those who had visited a Spanish-speaking country consistently reported proportionally fewer difficulties with the four skills in Spanish than the generality of subjects (Table 124).

TABLE 124 Proportions of all subjects who had learned Spanish reporting difficulties with the four skills compared with proportions of subjects who had learned Spanish and visited a Spanish-speaking country reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned Spanish (37)	No response	UG who had visited a Spanish-speaking country (20)	No response
Understanding speech	0.41	0.16	0.20	0.15
Speaking	0.57	0.16	0.40	0.15
Reading	0.38	0.16	0.30	0.15
Writing	0.51	0.16	0.40	0.15
	PG who had learned Spanish (41)	No response	PG who had visited a Spanish-speaking country (27)	No response
Understanding speech	0.42	0.10	0.30	0.07
Speaking	0.46	0.10	0.37	0.07
Reading	0.27	0.12	0.22	0.07
Writing	0.54	0.12	0.44	0.07

Proportionally fewer difficulties with the four skills in Spanish were reported by PG subjects whose Spanish learning materials at post-primary school had included non-textual/ audio-visual materials than by the generality of PG subjects who had learned Spanish (Table 125); the UG data show no clear trend in this area. A comparison of the numbers of difficulties reported by subjects who had used only or mainly textual Spanish learning materials at post-primary school with those reported by the whole set of subjects who had learned Spanish yields somewhat contradictory results (Table 126).

TABLE 125 Proportions of all subjects who had learned Spanish reporting difficulties with the four skills compared with proportions of subjects whose Spanish learning materials at second level had included non-textual/audio-visual materials reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned Spanish (37)	No response	UG who had used a/v materials (19)	No response
Understanding speech	0.41	0.16	0.47	0.16
Speaking	0.57	0.16	0.58	0.16
Reading	0.38	0.16	0.37	0.16
Writing	0.51	0.16	0.47	0.16
	PG who had learned Spanish (41)	No response	PG who had used a/v materials (12)	No response
Understanding speech	0.42	0.10	0.33	0.08
Speaking	0.46	0.10	0.33	0.08
Reading	0.27	0.12	0.25	0.08
Writing	0.54	0.12	0.42	0.08

TABLE 126 Proportions of all subjects who had learned Spanish reporting difficulties with the four skills compared with proportions of subjects whose Spanish learning materials at second level were exclusively or mainly textual reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned Spanish (37)	No response	UG who had used only/ mainly textual materials (9)	No response
Understanding speech	0.41	0.16	0.44	0.33
Speaking	0.57	0.16	0.56	0.33
Reading	0.33	0.16	0.22	0.33
Writing	0.51	0.16	0.33	0.33
	PG who had learned Spanish (41)	No response	PG who had used only/ mainly textual materials (13)	No response
Understanding speech	0.42	0.10	0.46	0.08
Speaking	0.46	0.10	0.54	0.08
Reading	0.27	0.12	0.31	0.08
Writing	0.54	0.12	0.46	0.08

5.4.2 Particular productive difficulties (cf. Tables 59-73, 1.4.2)

In respect of Spanish as in respect of other languages, the item which subjects seemed to find most difficult was "finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation". This was consistently most often classed as "very hard"/"hard" and least often as "easy"/"very easy" (Table 127). More UG and PG subjects found this item "very hard"/"hard" than found it either "normal" or "easy"/"very easy" (Table 128; cf. tables and discussion in 1.4.2).

The next two places in the "very hard"/"hard" sections of Table 127, as in the case of most of the other living curricular languages (cf. 1.4.2), are occupied by "getting the exact form right" and "finding the right word for a particular thing, idea, etc." These items also appear mid to low in the "easy"/"very easy" sections of Table 127. Both items were categorized more often as "very hard"/"hard" than as "normal" or "easy"/"very easy" by UG subjects (Table 128). PG subjects, however, classed "finding the right word" more often as "normal" than as "very hard"/"hard" or "easy"/"very easy", and "getting the exact form right" more often as "easy"/"very easy" than as "very hard"/"hard" or "normal" (Table 128).

TABLE 127 Subjects' difficulty ratings for different aspects of speaking and writing Spanish

UG
(37)

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Exact form	0.46	0.19	0.14	0.22
Right word	0.46	0.22	0.11	0.22
Word order	0.32	0.35	0.11	0.22
Pronunciation	0.22	0.30	0.27	0.22
Right turn of phrase	0.65	0.11	0.03	0.22
Intonation	0.38	0.22	0.19	0.22

PG
(41)

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Exact form	0.27	0.27	0.29	0.17
Right word	0.27	0.29	0.24	0.20
Word order	0.15	0.24	0.44	0.17
Pronunciation	0.12	0.24	0.49	0.15
Right turn of phrase	0.44	0.27	0.12	0.17
Intonation	0.15	0.29	0.39	0.17

Findings at the other end of the scale are also in line with results for most of the other languages (cf. 1.4.2). Consistently least often categorized as "very hard"/"hard" and most often as "easy"/"very easy" was "pronouncing the words properly". Consistently next from the bottom of the "very hard"/"hard" sections of Table 127 is "getting the word order right", which appears third from the top of the "easy"/ "very easy" section in the UG data and second from the top of this section in the PG data. Both these items were more often classed as "normal" than as "very hard"/"hard" or "easy"/ "very easy" by UG subjects and more often as "easy"/ "very easy" than as "very hard"/"hard" or "normal" by PG subjects (Table 128).

"Getting the intonation right" appears here, as in respect of most other languages (cf. 1.4.2), in a mid to low position in the "very hard"/"hard" sections of Table 127 - third from the bottom in the UG data and equal second from the bottom in the PG data. It correspondingly occupies a mid to high position in the "easy"/"very easy" sections of the table - second from the top in the UG data and third from the top in the PG data. Whereas UG subjects more often categorized it as "very hard"/"hard" than as "normal" or "easy"/"very easy", PG subjects more often classed it as "easy"/"very easy" than as "normal" or "very hard"/"hard" (Table 128).

TABLE 128 Categorization of difficulty ratings of productive aspects of Spanish according to highest numbers of subjects' responses

		UG	
	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy
Exact form	*		
Right word	*		
Word order		*	
Pronunciation		*	
Right turn of phrase	*		
Intonation	*		
		PG	
	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy
Exact form			*
Right word		*	
Word order			*
Pronunciation			*
Right turn of phrase	*		
Intonation			*

TABLE 129 Proportions of all subjects who had learned Spanish reporting particular productive problems compared with proportions of subjects who had learned Spanish and visited a Spanish-speaking country reporting such problems

	UG who had learned Spanish (37)	No response	UG who had visited a Spanish-speaking country (20)	No response
Exact form	0.46	0.22	0.45	0.15
Right word	0.46	0.22	0.50	0.15
Word order	0.32	0.22	0.25	0.15
Pronunciation	0.22	0.22	0.20	0.15
Right turn of phrase	0.65	0.22	0.65	0.15
Intonation	0.38	0.22	0.40	0.15
	PG who had learned Spanish (41)	No response	PG who had visited a Spanish-speaking country (27)	No response
Exact form	0.27	0.17	0.26	0.19
Right word	0.27	0.20	0.22	0.19
Word order	0.15	0.17	0.11	0.19
Pronunciation	0.12	0.15	0.07	0.19
Right turn of phrase	0.44	0.17	0.37	0.19
Intonation	0.15	0.17	0.11	0.19

Those PG subjects who had learned Spanish and had visited a Spanish-speaking country, consistently reported fewer productive difficulties than the generality of PG subjects who had learned Spanish; no such clear tendency emerges from the UG data however (Table 129).

TABLE 130 Proportions of all subjects who had learned Spanish reporting particular productive problems compared with proportions of subjects whose Spanish learning materials at second level had included non-textual/ audio-visual materials reporting such problems

	UG who had learned Spanish (37)	No response	UG who had used a/v materials (19)	No response
Exact form	0.46	0.22	0.47	0.16
Right word	0.46	0.22	0.47	0.16
Word order	0.32	0.22	0.32	0.16
Pronunciation	0.22	0.22	0.26	0.16
Right turn of phrase	0.65	0.22	0.79	0.16
Intonation	0.38	0.22	0.37	0.16

	PG who had learned Spanish (41)	No response	PG who had used a/v materials (12)	No response
Exact form	0.27	0.17	0.17	0.08
Right word	0.27	0.20	0.08	0.08
Word order	0.15	0.17	----	0.08
Pronunciation	0.12	0.15	0.08	0.08
Right turn of phrase	0.44	0.17	0.42	0.08
Intonation	0.15	0.17	0.08	0.08

TABLE 131 Proportions of all subjects who had learned Spanish reporting particular productive problems compared with proportions of subjects who had used exclusively or mainly textual Spanish learning materials at second level reporting such problems

	UG who had learned Spanish (37)	No response	UG who had used only/ mainly textual materials (9)	No response
Exact form	0.46	0.22	0.33	0.33
Right word	0.46	0.22	0.44	0.33
Word order	0.32	0.22	0.33	0.33
Pronuncation	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.33
Right turn of phrase	0.65	0.22	0.56	0.33
Intonation	0.38	0.22	0.56	0.33

	PG who had learned Spanish (41)	No response	PG who had used only/ mainly textual materials (13)	No response
Exact form	0.27	0.17	0.08	0.15
Right word	0.27	0.20	----	0.15
Word order	0.15	0.17	0.15	0.15
Pronunciation	0.12	0.15	----	0.15
Right turn of phrase	0.44	0.17	0.39	0.15
Intonation	0.15	0.17	----	0.15

PG subjects who had learned Spanish using materials at post-primary school which included non-textual/audio-visual materials likewise consistently reported proportionally fewer productive problems than the generality of PG subjects who had learned Spanish (Table 130). Again, however, no such trend is discernible in the UG data (ibid.).

Interestingly enough, PG subjects who had used exclusively or mainly textual Spanish learning materials also reported proportionally fewer difficulties with particular aspects of producing Spanish than the generality of PG subjects who had learned Spanish; in the UG data - here characterized by a relatively low base figure for the sub-group and relatively high "no response" rates - the picture is once again confused (Table 131).

Chapter 6

Experience of learning Italian

In this chapter there are no tables equivalent to Tables 80-82 and 86-88 in Chapter 2, Tables 95-97 and 101-103 in Chapter 3, and Tables 110-112 and 116-118 in Chapter 4. The reason for this is the smallness of the relevant sub-groups for Italian.

6.1 NUMBERS (cf. Table 1, 1.1)

The difference between the UG and the PG figures in regard to learning Italian is quite striking, the percentage of PG subjects who had learned Italian (15.5% - 32/207) being nearly double that of UG subjects in this category (7.9% - 19/240).

6.2 CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITUATIONS IN WHICH CONTACT WITH ITALIAN WAS ESTABLISHED

6.2.1 Home (cf. Tables 2-9, 1.2.1; Table 10, 1.2.2)

No subject reported Italian as his/her first language or as the first language of his/her mother, partner or children. One UG subject reported that his/her father was a native speaker of Italian. Italian was not reported by any subject to be a language of his/her household, although one UG subject did claim that his/her home environment had been a factor in the experience of learning Italian. No subject claimed to have begun learning Italian before normal school age.

6.2.2 Age (cf. Table 10, 1.2.2)

Well over a third of UG subjects (0.37 - 7/19) and more than half of PG subjects (0.53 - 17/32) who had learned Italian reported having begun learning it after the age of seventeen - that is to say around or after the end of the normal schooling period. An equal proportion of UG subjects (0.37 - 7/19) but only about a fifth of PG subjects (0.22 - 7/32) who had learned the language reported having started learning it between the ages of eleven and seventeen. Only one of th 19 UG subjects (0.05) who had learned Italian and none of the PG subjects who had learned Italian reported having begun learning it between four and ten years. No subject claimed to have begun learning Italian before the age of four.

6.2.3 Speech community (cf. Tables 11-19, 1.2.3)

More than one third of UG subjects (0.37 - 7/19) and nearly one fifth of PG subjects (0.19 - 6/32) who had learned Italian reported having learned it in their "own country" - that is, for most of them, Ireland. Somewhat fewer UG subjects (0.26 - 5/19) but somewhat more PG subjects (0.25 - 8/32) who had learned Italian claimed to have learned it in a "country where the language is native". Uniformly small proportions of subjects who had learned Italian reported having learned it in a place other than their "own country" or a "country where the language is native": UG 0.05 (1/19), PG 0.06 (2/32); whilst a combination of these last two learning situations appeared in the reports of only two UG subjects (0.11 - 2/19) but of nine PG subjects (0.28 - 9/32) who had learned Italian. The combination "country where the language is native" and "another place" (i.e. other than "own country" and "country where the langage is native") was also elicited in respect of Italian, but only twice: UG 0.05 (1/19), PG 0.03 (1/32).

About half of the UG subjects (0.53 - 10/19) and more than four fifths of the PG subjects (0.84 - 27/32) who had learned Italian reported having visited an Italian-speaking country. These subjects' reported communicative experience of Italian during such visits is summed up in Table 132.

TABLE 132 Communicative experience in Italian-speaking countries of subjects who had learned Italian expressed as proportions of all subjects who had learned Italian and visited such countries

	UG (10)	PG (26)
Italian spoken by them	0.60	0.31
Italian spoken to them	0.70	0.42
Italian spoken in their company	0.80	0.73
Italian and English spoken by them	0.20	0.50
Italian and English spoken to them	0.20	0.31
Italian and English spoken in their company	0.10	0.19

6.2.4 Factors in the learning experience (cf. Tables 20-26, 1.2.4)

In respect of Italian, as in respect of Irish, French, German and Spanish, subjects' reports on the factors which played a role in their language learning experience show a preponderance of references to formal educational and cultural factors over references to more "personal" factors. This preponderance is, however, less marked in the Italian data than in the data for any of these other languages.

Moreover, the showing of school as a factor in the experience of language learning is less prominent in the Italian data than in the data for Irish, French, German and Spanish (Table 133). Although UG subjects mentioned school in this context more frequently than any other single factor and nearly half as often as all other factors combined, PG subjects actually mentioned it less often than any other single factor apart from home and only about one seventh as often as all other factors combined.

TABLE 133 The importance of school as compared with all other factors in subjects' experience of learning Italian

	UG	PG
Number of times school was mentioned	8	6
Number of times other factors were mentioned	18	44

None of our subjects claimed to have taken Italian as a subject at primary school. Moreover, only about a quarter of UG (0.26 - 5/19) and an eighth of PG (0.13 - 4/32) reported having taken it at post-primary school. A markedly higher proportion of UG subjects (0.32 - 6/19) than of PG subjects (0.09 - 3/32) who had learned Italian claimed to have taken it or to be taking it as part of a degree course, and in this regard the Italian data are exceptional. On the other hand, the Italian data follow the general trend in revealing that a higher proportion of PG subjects (0.47 - 15/32) than of UG subjects (0.26 - 5/19) who had learned Italian reported having learned or studied it by means of courses other than school or degree courses.

6.3 LEARNING ITALIAN AT SCHOOL

6.3.1 Italian as a medium of instruction (cf. Tables 27 and 28, 1.3.1)

Of the five UG subjects who reported having taken Italian at post-primary school, two (0.40) claimed to have experienced the language as a medium of instruction at that level; only one (0.25) of the four PG subjects who reported having taken Italian at second level made this claim.

6.3.2 Activities and learning materials in the Italian class (cf. Tables 29-38, 1.3.2)

The Italian data concur with the data for the other living curricular languages in showing a preponderance of references to written productive activities over references to oral productive activities in respect of language learning at second level. Subjects reporting on their experience of Italian at school also followed learners of Irish, French, German and Spanish in consistently mentioning "mechanical" activities more often than "creative" activities in connexion with the language class.

As for Italian learning materials, references to textual materials are consistently more numerous than references to non-textual/audio-visual materials. This is again in line with tendencies discernible in most of the data for other languages.

6.3.3 Enjoyment (cf. Tables 40 and 41, 1.3.3)

Three of the five UG subjects (0.60) and one of the four PG subjects (0.25) who had taken Italian at post-primary school characterized it as the language they had most enjoyed at that level. No subject said that Italian was the language he/she had least enjoyed at second level.

The data for Italian therefore resemble the English, French and Spanish data in showing a clear preponderance of "most enjoyed" over "least enjoyed" responses in respect of the language as a school subject.

6.4 LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFICIENCY IN ITALIAN

6.4.1 The four skills (cf. Tables 42-58, 1.4.1)

The level of claims of ability in the four skills in Italian (Table 134) is on the whole proportionally below the level of claims made in respect of Irish and French but generally above the level of claims made in respect of German and Spanish. The Italian data concur with the data for Irish, French, German and Spanish in showing a consistent trend for subjects to claim ability in the receptive skills (reading and understanding speech) more readily than in the productive skills (writing and speaking). PG subjects tended to be more confident than UG subjects in their claims as far as the receptive skills were concerned, but less confident than UG subjects in regard to the productive skills.

TABLE 134 Subjects' claimed ability in the four skills in Italian

	UG (19)	PG (32)
Understanding speech	0.79	0.91
Speaking	0.74	0.56
Reading	0.84	0.91
Writing	0.63	0.28

With regard to subjects' assessment of the difficulty of the four skills in Italian (Tables 135 and 136), the productive skills were consistently more often deemed "very hard"/"hard" than were the receptive skills, and consistently less often deemed "normal" or "easy"/"very easy" than were the receptive skills. Moreover, whereas writing and speaking were both consistently categorized as "very hard"/"hard" more often than as "normal" or "easy"/"very easy", reading was categorized more often as "normal" by PG subjects and equally often as "normal" and "very hard"/"hard" by UG subjects, and understanding speech was more often classed as "normal" by UG and PG subjects alike.

TABLE 135 Subjects' difficulty ratings for the four skills in Italian

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
		UG (19)		
Understanding speech	0.21	0.53	0.26	----
Speaking	0.47	0.32	0.21	----
Reading	0.37	0.37	0.26	----
Writing	0.58	0.26	0.16	----

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
		PG (32)		
Understanding speech	0.31	0.34	0.16	0.19
Speaking	0.50	0.22	0.13	0.16
Reading	0.28	0.38	0.19	0.16
Writing	0.56	0.22	0.03	0.19

TABLE 136 Categorization of the four skills in Italian according to highest numbers of subjects' responses

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy
		UG	
Understanding speech		*	
Speaking	*		
Reading	*	*	
Writing	*		
		PG	
Understanding speech		*	
Speaking	*		
Reading		*	
Writing	*		

In comparison with the generality of UG subjects who had learned Italian, those who had visited an Italian-speaking country on the whole reported fewer difficulties with the four skills in Italian (Table 137). On the other hand, a similar comparison as far as PG subjects' reports are concerned yields a consistently contrary trend (ibid.).

TABLE 137 Proportions of all subjects who had learned Italian reporting difficulties with the four skills, compared with proportions of subjects who had learned Italian and visited an Italian-speaking country reporting such difficulties

	UG who had learned Italian (19)	No response	UG who had visited an Italian-speaking country (10)	No response
Understanding speech	0.21	----	0.10	0.10
Speaking	0.47	----	0.30	0.10
Reading	0.37	----	0.30	0.10
Writing	0.58	----	0.60	0.10

	PG who had learned Italian (32)	No response	PG who had visited an Italian-speaking country (27)	No response
Understanding speech	0.31	0.19	0.33	0.11
Speaking	0.50	0.16	0.52	0.11
Reading	0.28	0.16	0.33	0.11
Writing	0.56	0.19	0.63	0.11

6.4.2 Particular productive difficulties (cf. Tables 59-73, 1.4.2)

The data for Italian are entirely in line with the data for the other languages as far as the aspect of production most often deemed "very hard"/"hard" and least often "easy"/ "very easy" is concerned (Table 138). This item - "finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation" - was judged to be "very hard"/"hard" by an absolute majority of both UG and PG subjects who had learned Italian (Table 139; cf. tables and discussion in 1.4.2).

Next most often characterized as "very hard"/"hard" and least often as "easy"/"very easy" were "getting the exact form right" and "finding the right word for a particular thing, idea, etc." (Table 138). Again this finding forms part of a pattern of responses common to most other languages(cf. 1.4.2). More UG subjects categorized both these items as "normal" than as "very hard"/"hard" or as "easy"/"very easy"; more PG subjects also found "getting the exact form right" "normal" than found it "very hard"/"hard" or "easy"/"very easy", but PG subjects classed "finding the right word" more often as "very hard"/"hard" than as "normal" or "easy"/"very easy" (Table 139).

TABLE 138 Subjects' difficulty rating for different aspects of speaking and writing Italian

	UG (19)			
	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Exact form	0.37	0.42	0.16	0.05
Right word	0.32	0.58	0.05	0.05
Word order	0.21	0.58	0.16	0.05
Pronunciation	0.26	0.26	0.42	0.05
Right turn of phrase	0.58	0.37	----	0.05
Intonation	0.32	0.37	0.26	0.05

	PG (32)			
	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy	no response
Exact form	0.34	0.38	0.03	0.25
Right word	0.38	0.31	0.06	0.25
Word order	0.25	0.47	0.06	0.22
Pronunciation	0.06	0.34	0.34	0.25
Right turn of phrase	0.53	0.22	----	0.25
Intonation	0.16	0.28	0.31	0.25

The three items which consistently figure at the other end of the scale are the same in the case of Italian as in the case of most of the other languages, namely "pronouncing the words properly", "getting the right intonation" and "getting the word order right". In both the UG and the PG data "pronouncing the words properly" appears at the top of the "easy"/"very easy" section of Table 138 and was more often categorized as "easy"/"very easy" than as "very hard"/"hard" (Table 139). "Getting the right intonation" also appears mid to low in the "very hard"/"hard" sections of Table 138 and high in the "easy"/"very easy" sections. It was classed more often as "normal" than as "very hard"/"hard" or "easy"/"very easy" by UG subjects and more often as "easy"/ "very easy" than as "normal" or "very hard"/"hard" by PG subjects (Table 139). "Getting the word order right" appears mid to low in the "very hard"/"hard" sections of Table 138 and also around the middle of the "easy"/ "very easy" sections, and was consistently categorized more often as "normal" than as "very hard"/"hard" or "easy"/"very easy" (Table 139).

TABLE 139 Categorization of different aspects of producing Italian according to highest numbers of subjects' responses

	very hard/ hard	normal	easy/ very easy
		UG	
Exact form		*	
Right word		*	
Word order		*	
Pronunciation			*
Right turn of phrase	*		
Intonation		*	
		PG	
Exact form		*	
Right word	*		
Word order		*	
Pronunciation		*	*
Right turn of phrase	*		
Intonation			*

A comparison of the numbers of particular productive difficulties reported by all subjects who had learned Italian with those reported by subjects who had learned Italian and had visited an Italian-speaking country yields no clear trend (Table 140).

TABLE 140 Proportions of all subjects who had learned Italian reporting particular productive problems compared with proportions of subjects who had learned Italian and visited an Italian-speaking country reporting such problems

	UG who had learned Italian (19)	No response	UG who had visited an Italian-speaking country (10)	No response
Exact form	0.37	0.05	0.30	----
Right word	0.32	0.05	0.50	----
Word order	0.21	0.05	0.10	----
Pronunciation	0.26	0.05	0.10	----
Right turn of phrase	0.58	0.05	0.70	----
Intonation	0.32	0.05	0.50	----

	PG who had learned Italian (32)	No response	PG who had visited an Italian-speaking country (27)	No response
Exact form	0.34	0.25	0.37	0.22
Right word	0.38	0.25	0.41	0.22
Word order	0.25	0.22	0.22	0.22
Pronunciation	0.06	0.25	0.04	0.22
Right turn of phrase	0.53	0.25	0.56	0.22
Intonation	0.16	0.25	0.15	0.22

Chapter 7

Experience of learning languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

With the exception of Latin, the numbers of respondents reporting a knowledge of any individual language other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian are very small. Thus much of the data supplied by our respondents in respect of such other languages can have only anecdotal significance, especially since individual languages flit in and out of the data according as the response rate varies. For this reason the information presented in this chapter is limited to the numbers of subjects reporting contact with languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian and the circumstances/situations in which contact with such languages was established.

It should be noted that throughout this chapter "Greek" embraces the classical and the modern language. No respondent distinguished between the two, but it seems likely that some replies referred to the modern rather than the classical language. "Creole" was mentioned by one subject; it seems probable that he/she was referring to one of the Caribbean creoles.

7.1 NUMBERS

More than half our UG subjects (52.9%; 127/240) and just under three quarters of our PG subjects (72.0%; 149/207) claimed to know one or more languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. The details are set out in Tables 141 and 142. The two most obvious facts that emerge from these tables are that a much wider range of "other languages" was mentioned by PG than by UG subjects, and that more subjects - both UG and PG - claimed some knowledge of Latin than of any other language in the "other languages" category. One factor that helps to explain the former is the higher proportion of overseas students in the postgraduate population; the latter is to be accounted for in terms of the place Latin has traditionally occupied - and to some extent still occupies - in the Irish post-primary school curriculum.

TABLE 141 Percentages of UG subjects claiming knowledge of languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

	(N=240)
Latin	43.3%
Greek	4.2%
Scots Gaelic	0.8%
Welsh	0.8%
Dutch	2.5%
Portuguese	0.4%
Danish	1.3%
Finnish	0.8%
Swedish	0.4%
Russian	1.7%
Arabic	0.4%
Hebrew	0.8%
Afrikaans	0.8%
Efik	0.4%
Ibo	0.8%
Swahili	0.8%
Gujarati	0.4%
Hindi	0.8%
Sanskrit	0.8%
Bahasa Malaysia	0.4%
Chinese	1.3%
Japanese	0.4%

TABLE 142 Percentages of PG subjects claiming knowledge of languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

	(N=207)
Latin	57.0%
Greek	3.4%
Breton	1.0%
Manx	0.5%
Scots Gaelic	2.4%
Welsh	1.9%
Dutch	2.9%
Portuguese	1.5%
Danish	0.5%
Finnish	1.0%
Icelandic	0.5%
Norwegian	1.0%
Swedish	1.0%
Lithuanian	0.5%
Russian	5.8%
Serbo-Croat	1.5%
Arabic	3.9%
Hebrew	1.0%
Turkish	0.5%
Afrikaans	1.0%
Hausa	0.5%
Kikamba	0.5%
Memon	0.5%
Swahili	0.5%
Zulu	1.5%
Gujarati	0.5%
Hindi	1.0%
Kannada	0.5%
Punjabi	0.5%
Sanskrit	0.5%
Tamil	1.0%
Urdu	0.5%
Bahasa Malaysia	1.0%
Chinese	1.0%
Japanese	0.5%
"Creole"	0.5%

7.2 CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITUATIONS IN WHICH CONTACT WITH LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH, IRISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH AND ITALIAN WAS ESTABLISHED

7.2.1 Home

3.3% of UG (8/240) and 6.8% of PG subjects (14/207) reported a language other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian as their first language or one of their first languages. A language-by-language breakdown of these figures is given in Table 143. 3.8% of UG (9/240) and 6.3% of PG subjects (13/207) claimed that their mother had a native language other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian, and 4.6% of UG (11/240) and 6.3% of PG subjects (13/207) made this claim in relation to their father. 3.0% of the 67 UG and 9.3% of the 86 PG subjects who had a spouse/partner reported that their spouse/partner had a native language other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian, and 0.15 of the 13 UG and 0.09 of the 47 PG subjects with children claimed that their children had a native language other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian. 1.3% of the 225 UG and 3.5% of the 172 PG subjects living in households reported that a language other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian was in current use in their household.

It is clear from Table 143 that some of the individual "other languages" feature in the data solely or mainly by virtue of their having been a first language of a particular subject or subjects. The impression that certain individual "other languages" were predominantly the home languages of the groups of subjects who mentioned them is reinforced if one takes into account subjects' reported experience of learning particular "other languages" before the age of four (Tables 144 and 145).

TABLE 143 Proportions of subjects reporting a knowledge of particular languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian who claimed to be native speakers of these "other languages"

UG		PG	
Dutch (6)	0.17	Dutch (6)	0.17
		Finnish (2)	0.50
		Serbo-Croat (3)	0.33
		Arabic (8)	0.88
Ibo (2)	1.00		
		Memon (1)	1.00
Gujarati (1)	1.00		
		Kannada (1)	1.00
		Tamil (2)	1.00
Chinese (3)	1.00		

7.2.2 Age

TABLE 144 Age at which UG subjects reported having started learning languages they knew other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Proportions relate to number of UG subjects who knew each language

	Before 4	4-10	11-17	After 17	No response
Latin (104)	---	0.04	0.30	---	0.66
Greek (10)	---	---	0.30	0.30	0.40
Scots Gaelic (2)	---	---	---	1.00	---
Dutch (6)	0.17	---	---	0.33	0.50
Danish (3)	---	---	---	0.33	0.67
Swedish (1)	---	---	---	1.00	---
Russian (4)	---	---	---	0.25	0.75
Afrikaans (2)	---	---	0.50	---	0.50
Efik (1)	1.00	---	---	---	---
Ibo (2)	1.00	---	---	---	---
Swahili (2)	---	0.50	0.50	---	---
Gujarati (1)	1.00	---	---	---	---
Hindi (2)	0.50	---	---	---	0.50
Chinese (3)	1.00	---	---	---	---

No data provided in respect of Welsh, Portuguese, Finnish, Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit, Bahasa Malaysia, Japanese.

TABLE 145 Age at which PG subjects reported having started learning languages they knew other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Proportions relate to number of PG subjects who knew each language

	Before 4	4-10	11-17	After 17	No response
Latin (118)	----	0.02	0.15	0.01	0.82
Greek (7)	----	----	0.14	0.14	0.71
Scots Gaelic (5)	----	----	----	0.20	0.80
Welsh (4)	----	----	----	0.50	0.50
Dutch (6)	0.17	0.17	----	0.50	0.17
Portuguese (3)	----	----	----	0.67	0.33
Danish (1)	----	----	----	1.00	----
Finnish (2)	0.50	----	0.50	----	----
Norwegian (2)	----	----	----	0.50	0.50
Swedish (2)	----	----	0.50	0.50	----
Russian (12)	----	----	----	0.42	0.58
Serbo-Croat (3)	0.33	----	----	----	0.67
Arabic (8)	0.63	0.25	----	0.13	----
Hebrew (2)	----	----	----	0.50	0.50
Afrikaans (2)	----	1.00	----	----	----
Hausa (1)	----	----	----	1.00	----
Memon (1)	1.00	----	----	----	----
Swahili (1)	----	----	----	1.00	----
Zulu (3)	----	0.33	----	----	0.67
Hindi (2)	----	----	1.00	----	----
Kannada (1)	1.00	----	----	----	----
Punjabi (1)	----	----	----	1.00	----
Tamil (2)	0.50	0.50	----	----	----
Urdu (1)	----	----	----	1.00	----
Bahasa Malaysia (2)	----	0.50	----	----	0.50
Chinese (2)	----	----	----	0.50	0.50

No data provided in respect of Breton, Manx, Icelandic, Lithuanian, Turkish, Kikamba, Gujarati, Sanskrit, Japanese, "Creole".

It is noticeable that (especially if one excludes Latin, which still features on the curriculum of some Irish schools) responses concerning the age at which "other languages" were first encountered tend to cluster at either end of the age-scale; that is, in the "Before 4" and "After 17" categories (Tables 144 and 145). It is not difficult to find a plausible explanation for this tendency; languages other than the normal Irish curriculum languages presumably figure in the data largely because (a) they were the home languages of particular subjects, in which case they were typically learned early (cf. above, 7.2.1), and/or (b) they were learned as a result of interests and needs which developed outside the context of home and school, in which case they were typically acquired around or after the end of the normal school years.

Many of the languages feature exclusively at one or other end of the age-scale. Serbo-Croat, Gujarati, Memon, Ibo, Efik and Kannada were consistently reported by respondents to this question as having been begun before the age of four, whereas Russian, Portuguese, Norwegian, Danish, Hebrew, Welsh, Scots Gaelic, Urdu, Punjabi and Hausa were consistently reported as having been started after the age of seventeen.

7.2.3 Speech community

In respect of "other languages" the consistently most often used category in response to the question "Where did you learn the language(s) you know?" was "in my own country", and the second most often used category was "in the country where the language is native" (Tables 146 and 147). Of course, the use of these categories must be differently motivated from language to language and from individual to individual; this is to an extent true of the data in general, but must be a particularly significant factor in the case of these "other languages". For example, the fact that all subjects who had learned Latin and who answered this question ticked the "in my own country" column in respect of this language presumably simply reflects the place of Latin on the school curriculum, whereas the fact that the single subject who had learned Memon ticked the same column almost certainly signifies that for him/her in this context "own country" and "country where the language is native" referred to the same place.

TABLE 146 Where UG subjects reported having learned languages they knew other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Proportions relate to number of UG subjects who knew each language

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Latin (104)	0.31	----	----	----	----	0.69
Greek (10)	0.40	0.20	----	----	----	0.40
Scots Gaelic (2)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Dutch (6)	0.17	0.33	----	----	----	0.50
Danish (3)	----	0.33	----	----	----	0.67
Swedish (1)	----	1.00	----	----	----	----
Russian (4)	----	0.25	0.25	----	----	0.50
Afrikaans (2)	0.50	----	----	----	----	0.50
Efik (1)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Ibo (2)	0.50	----	----	0.50	----	----
Swahili (2)	----	1.00	----	----	----	----
Gujarati (1)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Hindi (2)	----	----	----	0.50	----	0.50
Bahasa Malaysia (1)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Chinese (3)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----

No data provided in respect of Welsh, Portuguese, Finnish, Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit, Japanese.

Key:

1 = In own country
2 = In country where the language is native
3 = In another place
4 = In own country and country where the language is native
5 = Other combination
6 = No response

TABLE 147 Where PG subjects reported having learned languages they knew other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Proportions relate to the number PG subjects who knew each language.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Latin (118)	0.19	----	----	----	----	0.81
Greek (7)	0.43	----	----	----	----	0.57
Scots Gaelic (5)	0.40	----	----	----	----	0.60
Welsh (4)	----	0.25	----	0.50	----	0.25
Dutch (6)	----	0.17	0.33	0.33	----	0.17
Portuguese (3)	----	0.33	----	----	0.33	0.33
Danish (1)	----	1.00	----	----	----	----
Finnish (2)	0.50	----	----	----	0.50	----
Norwegian (2)	----	0.50	----	----	----	0.50
Swedish (2)	----	0.50	----	0.50	----	----
Russian (12)	0.50	----	----	----	----	0.50
Serbo-Croat (3)	0.33	----	----	----	----	0.67
Arabic (8)	0.88	----	----	0.13	----	----
Hebrew (2)	0.50	----	----	0.50	----	----
Afrikaans (2)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Hausa (1)	----	1.00	----	----	----	----
Memon (1)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Swahili (1)	----	1.00	----	----	----	----
Zulu (3)	0.33	----	----	----	----	0.67
Hindi (2)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Kannada (1)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Punjabi (1)	----	1.00	----	----	----	----
Tamil (2)	0.50	----	----	0.50	----	----
Urdu (1)	----	1.00	----	----	----	----
Bahasa Malaysia (2)	0.50	----	----	----	----	0.50
Chinese (2)	----	0.50	----	----	0.50	----

No data provided in respect of Breton, Manx, Icelandic, Lithuanian, Turkish, Kikamba, Gujarati, Sanskrit, Japanese, "Creole".

Key:

1 = In own country
2 = In country where the language is native
3 = In another place
4 = In own country and country where the language is native
5 = Other combination
6 = No response

7.2.4 Factors in the learning experience

As Tables 148-151 show, there was considerable language-to-language variation in the range of factors reported as having played a role in subjects' experience of learning "other languages". In some cases there was a clear preponderance of references to either formal educational/cultural factors or to "personal" factors, while in other cases responses were more evenly distributed among the various categories. As in the case of Irish, French, German and Spanish, school loomed very large in subjects' perceptions of their experience of learning many of the "other languages" (Table 152).

TABLE 148 Factors reported by UG subjects as having played a role in their experience of learning languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Proportions relate to the number of UG subjects who knew each language.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Latin (104)	0.02	0.34	----	0.02	0.01	0.05
Greek (10)	----	0.50	0.10	----	----	----
Scots Gaelic (2)	----	0.50	----	0.50	----	0.50
Welsh (2)	----	----	----	0.50	----	0.50
Dutch (6)	0.33	----	0.33	----	----	0.17
Danish (3)	----	0.33	0.33	----	----	0.33
Swedish (1)	----	----	1.00	----	----	1.00
Afrikaans (2)	----	0.50	----	----	----	----
Efik (1)	----	1.00	----	----	----	----
Ibo (2)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Swahili (2)	0.50	----	----	----	----	----
Guejarati (1)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Hindi (2)	----	----	0.50	----	----	0.50
Sanskrit (2)	----	0.50	----	----	----	----
Bahasia Malaysia (1)	----	1.00	----	----	----	----
Chinese (3)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----

No data provided in respect of Portuguese, Finnish, Russian, Arabic, Hebrew, Japanese.

Key:

1 = Home
2 = School
3 = Friends, native speakers
4 = University, language course, study
5 = Travel
6 = Literature, media, music

TABLE 149 Factors reported by PG subjects as having played a role in their experience of learning languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Proportions relate to the number of PG subjects who knew each language.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Latin (118)	----	0.21	----	0.03	----	0.07
Greek (7)	----	0.14	----	0.29	----	----
Scots Gaelic (5)	----	0.20	----	0.60	----	0.20
Welsh (4)	----	----	0.50	0.75	----	0.25
Dutch (6)	0.17	----	0.67	0.17	----	0.33
Portuguese (3)	----	----	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33
Finnish (2)	0.50	----	0.50	0.50	----	----
Norwegian (2)	----	0.50	0.50	----	----	0.50
Swedish (2)	----	1.00	0.50	----	----	----
Russian (12)	----	----	0.08	0.33	----	0.08
Serbo-Croat (3)	0.33	----	----	0.33	0.67	----
Arabic (8)	0.88	----	----	----	0.13	0.13
Hebrew (2)	----	----	----	1.00	----	----
Afrikaans (2)	----	1.00	0.50	----	----	----
Hausa (1)	----	----	1.00	----	1.00	----
Memon (1)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Swahili (1)	----	----	1.00	1.00	----	----
Zulu (3)	----	----	0.33	----	----	----
Gujarati (1)	----	----	1.00	----	----	----
Hindi (2)	----	1.00	----	----	----	----
Kannada (1)	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Punjabi (1)	----	----	1.00	----	1.00	----
Tamil (2)	1.00	----	0.50	----	0.50	----
Bahasa Malaysia (2)	----	0.50	----	----	----	----
Chinese (2)	----	0.50	0.50	----	----	----
Japanese (1)	----	----	----	1.00	1.00	----

No data provided in respect of Breton, Manx, Danish, Icelandic, Lithuanian, Turkish, Kikamba, Sanskrit, Urdu, "Creole"

Key:

1 = Home
2 = School
3 = Friends, native speakers
4 = University, language course, study
5 = Travel
6 = Literature, media, music

TABLE 150 Languages in respect of which only formal educational/cultural factors were mentioned by respondents

UG	PG
Scots Gaelic	Latin
Welsh	Greek
Afrikaans	Scots Gaelic
Efik	Hebrew
Sanskrit	Hindi
Bahasa Malaysia	Bahasa Malaysia

TABLE 151 Languages in respect of which only "personal" factors were mentioned by respondents

UG	PG
Ibo	Hausa
Swahili	Menon
Gujarati	Zulu
Chinese	Gujarati
	Kannada
	Punjabi
	Tamil

TABLE 152 The importance of school as compared with other factors in subjects' experience of learning languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

UG		PG	
School mentioned more often than any other single factor	School mentioned as often as any other single factor	School mentioned more often than any other single factor	School mentioned as often as any other single factor
Latin Greek Afrikaans Efik Sanskrit Bahasa Malaysia	Scots Gaelic Danish	Latin Swedish Afrikaans Hindi Bahasa Malaysia	Norwegian Chinese

A detailed account of the proportions of subjects claiming a knowledge of particular "other languages" who reported having taken the "other languages" in question at primary and post-primary school is provided by Tables 153 and 154. Similar details in respect of degree courses and other kinds of courses in the "other languages" are presented in Tables 155 and 156.

TABLE 153 Proportions of subjects claiming a knowledge of particular languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian who reported having taken these languages at primary school

UG		PG	
Latin (104)	0.10	Latin (118)	0.04
		Welsh (4)	0.25
Dutch (6)	0.17	Dutch (6)	0.17
		Finnish (2)	0.50
		Serbo-Croat (3)	0.33
Arabic (1)	1.00	Arabic (8)	0.88
Afrikaans (2)	0.50	Afrikaans (2)	1.00
Efik (1)	1.00		
Ibo (2)	0.50		
Hindi (2)	0.50	Hindi (2)	0.50
		Kannada (1)	1.00
		Tamil (2)	0.50
Bahasa Malaysia (1)	1.00	Bahasa Malaysia (2)	0.50
Chinese (3)	0.67		

TABLE 154 Proportions of subjects claiming a knowledge of particular languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian who reported having taken these languages at post-primary school

UG		PG	
Latin (104)	1.00	Latin (118)	1.00
Greek (10)	1.00	Greek (7)	0.86
Welsh (2)	0.50		
Dutch (6)	0.17		
		Finnish (2)	0.50
		Swedish (2)	0.50
Russian (4)	0.25	Russian (12)	0.17
		Serbo-Croat (3)	0.33
		Arabic (8)	0.88
		Afrikaans (2)	1.00
Efik (1)	1.00		
Hindi (2)	1.00	Hindi (2)	1.00
		Kannada (1)	1.00
		Tamil (2)	0.50
Bahasa Malaysia (1)	1.00	Bahasa Malaysia (2)	1.00
Chinese (3)	0.67		

TABLE 155 Proportions of subjects claiming a knowledge of particular languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian who reported having taken degree courses in these languages

UG		PG	
Latin (104)	0.03	Latin (118)	0.09
Greek (10)	0.20	Greek (7)	0.14
		Scots Gaelic (5)	0.80
		Welsh (4)	1.00
Russian (4)	0.25	Russian (12)	0.08
		Arabic (8)	0.13
		Hebrew (2)	1.00
Sanskrit (2)	0.50		
		Chinese (2)	0.50

TABLE 156 Proportions of subjects claiming a knowledge of particular languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian who reported having taken courses in those languages other than school or university/college courses

UG		PG	
Latin (104)	0.01		
Greek (10)	0.20	Greek (7)	0.29
		Breton (2)	0.50
		Scots Gaelic (5)	0.20
		Welsh (4)	0.25
		Dutch (6)	0.67
Portuguese (1)	1.00	Portuguese (3)	0.67
Danish (3)	0.33	Danish (1)	1.00
		Finnish (2)	0.50
		Norwegian (2)	0.50
		Swedish (2)	0.50
		Lithuanian (1)	1.00
Russian (4)	0.25	Russian (12)	0.58
Arabic (1)	1.00	Arabic (8)	0.13
		Hebrew (2)	0.50
		Sanskrit (1)	1.00

Part II

Attitudes and needs

Chapter 8

Attitudes to second languages and interest in language learning : an overview with particular reference to Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

Insofar as this chapter deals with data on individual languages, like Chapter 1 it focuses on Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Data on attitudes towards particular languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian are presented in Chapter 14.

8.1 ATTITUDES TO SECOND LANGUAGES

8.1.1 Subjects' attitudes to languages they already knew

The overwhelming majority of both UG and PG subjects responded affirmatively to the question "Are there any languages you know but would like to know better?" - UG 92.1% (221/240), PG 85.0% (176/207). An affirmative response to this question implies a recognition that languages to some extent already learned may be useful in the future; but of course it says nothing about the quality or success of the learning experience to date. It is possible that some subjects felt that they would like to improve their existing knowledge of a second language because they had pleasant memories of the learning process; whereas the desire of other subjects to know better a language/ languages they already knew may have arisen from dissatisfaction with the level of proficiency they had achieved - they may even have experienced failure when attempting to use the language as a medium of communication.

Table 157 shows the percentages of subjects reporting that they would like to know different languages better. The distribution of Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian here corresponds broadly to their distribution in the schools except in the case of Irish and Spanish. This emerges clearly in Table 158, where the number of subjects who reported that they would like to know each language better is expressed as a percentage of the total number of subjects reporting a knowledge of that language. For whatever reasons, French, German and Italian commanded almost exactly the same degree of loyalty among subjects who had learned them; whereas Spanish and Irish lagged a long way behind.

TABLE 157 Percentages of subjects reporting that they would like to know better Irish, French, German, Spanish, Italian. Percentages relate to the total numbers of subjects who reported that they would like to know better a language that they already knew.

	UG (221)	PG (176)
Irish	31.7%	28.4%
French	77.4%	65.9%
German	29.9%	27.8%
Spanish	7.7%	11.9%
Italian	6.3%	11.9%

TABLE 158 Numbers of subjects reporting that they would like to know Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian better, expressed as percentages of all subjects reporting a knowledge of those languages

	UG		PG	
Irish	34.8%	70/201	31.1%	50/161
French	77.4%	171/221	62.0%	116/187
German	76.7%	66/86	66.2%	49/74
Spanish	46.0%	17/37	51.2%	21/41
Italian	73.7%	14/19	65.6%	21/32

Table 159 shows the percentages of subjects reporting that they had learned each language at post-primary school who also reported that they would like to know it better. Comparisons with Table 158 show that school-based learning had no consistent influence on subjects' interest in knowing each language better. For Irish the percentage of subjects who reported that they had learned the language at school and said they would like to know it better is very slightly higher than the percentage of all learners who said they would like to know the language better. For French the percentage is marginally higher among UG and higher by 8% among PG. For German the percentage is nearly 10% lower among UG and marginally lower among PG. For Spanish the percentage is 4% higher among UG but more than 12% lower among PG. Italian was rarely taken at school. A comparison of Tables 158 and 159 provides a useful reminder of the frequency with which German and Italian among UG and German, Spanish and Italian among PG had been learned in circumstances other than at school (cf. 1.2.4, 4.2.4, 5.2.4 and 6.2.4 above).

TABLE 159 Percentages of subjects reporting that they had learned Irish, French, German, Spanish, Italian at post-primary school who said they would like to know that language better

	UG		PG	
Irish	35.4%	70/198	31.8%	49/154
French	78.1%	171/219	69.9%	116/166
German	67.3%	35/52	65.6%	21/32
Spanish	50.0%	14/28	38.5%	10/26
Italian	40.0%	2/5	50.0%	2/4

TABLE 160 Percentages of subjects achieving Grade A or B in the school-leaving (or equivalent) exam in Irish, French, German, Spanish, Italian who said they would like to know that language better. Percentages relate to the total number of subjects reporting that they had taken a school-leaving exam in each language.

	UG		PG	
Irish	34.0%	18/53	37.3%	19/51
French	74.2%	49/66	55.6%	25/45
German	50.0%	8/16	50.0%	4/8
Spanish	37.5%	3/8	50.0%	5/10
Italian	33.3%	1/3	0.0%	0/4

A comparison of the percentages of all subjects who took each language at school and said they would like to know it better (Table 159) with percentages of subjects achieving Grade A or B in the school-leaving (or equivalent) examination in each language who said they would like to know that language better (Table 160) reveals an inconsistent relation between examination success in a particular language and a desire to know that language better. Only in the cases of Irish and Spanish in the PG data are the percentages in Table 160 higher than those in Table 159; in all other cases they are lower. This may indeed indicate a tendency for examination success to give a sense that learning has been satisfactorily completed.

8.1.2 Subjects' attitudes to languages they did not know

The great majority of UG and PG subjects responded affirmatively to the question "Are there any languages you do not know but would like to know?" - UG 80.8% (194/240), PG 74.9% (155/207). Table 161 shows the percentages of subjects who said they would like to know a language/languages they did not know specifying Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian; and Table 162 shows the level of interest in these five languages by expressing the number of subjects who said they would like to know each language as a percentage of all subjects who did not report a knowledge of that language. Chapters 9-14 discuss the level of interest in each language in more detail than is appropriate here. In general three point emerge clearly from Table 162. First, French remained an automatic first-choice foreign language for a substantial proportion of subjects (the figure for PG is surprisingly high); secondly, German was clearly rated an important language - perhaps one that many more of our subjects would have liked the opportunity to learn at school; thirdly, the level of interest expressed in Spanish in no way matches its importance as an international language.

TABLE 161 Percentages of subjects reporting that they did not know but would like to know Irish, French, German, Spanish, Italian. Percentages relate to total numbers of subjects who reported that they would like to know a language that they did not know already.

	UG (194)	PG (155)
Irish	5.7%	7.1%
French	5.7%	12.3%
German	45.9%	47.7%
Spanish	22.2%	20.0%
Italian	18.6%	21.3%

TABLE 162 Numbers of subjects expressing an interest in each language expressed as a percentage of all subjects who did not know that language

	UG		PG	
Irish	28.2%	11/39	23.9%	11/46
French	57.9%	11/19	95.0%	19/20
German	57.8%	89/154	55.6%	74/133
Spanish	21.2%	43/203	18.7%	31/166
Italian	16.3%	36/221	18.9%	33/175

8.2 SUBJECTS' REASONS FOR INTEREST IN SECOND LANGUAGES

8.2.1 Subjects' perceptions of the advantages of second language learning

Table 163 shows subjects' views on the advantages of second language learning. UG and PG agreed on three things. First, the advantage most commonly perceived has to do with travel, tourism and holidays abroad (though UG attached equal importance to the social advantages of second language learning); secondly, the same percentages of UG and PG saw cross-cultural understanding as an advantage; and thirdly, both groups (but especially UG) saw little advantage in learning second languages for academic purposes. The positive attitude to second languages discussed in 8.1 thus seems to identify itself with tourism and to a lesser degree with cross-cultural understanding, whereas in their attitude to academic study subjects reflected the overwhelmingly monolingual bias of their environment. As regards the other six categories of advantage attaching to second language learning, there are some interesting divergences between UG and PG views. On the one hand UG appear to have taken a more sanguine view of the possibility of second language learning issuing in oral communication: 32.9% of UG but only 19.3% of PG mentioned job opportunities as an advantage of second language learning; 43.3% of UG but only 20.3% of PG mentioned the social advantages of second language learning; and 22.9% of UG but

TABLE 163 Percentages of subjects specifying different advantages of knowing languages other than one's first language

	UG (240)	PG (207)
Travel, tourism work abroad	43.3%	46.4%
Employment and business opportunities	32.9%	19.3%
Academic work	1.3%	6.8%
International communication	22.9%	12.6%
Social advantages	43.3%	20.3%
Self-development	28.8%	34.8%
Cross-cultural understanding	32.5%	32.9%
Increased awareness of own language and/or culture	4.2%	7.3%
Access to foreign literature, cinema, theatre	16.3%	19.3%
No response	10.8%	10.6%

only 12.6% of PG mentioned international communication as an advantage. On the other hand PG attached somewhat greater importance to specific intellectual and cultural advantages of second language learning: 34.8% of PG compared with 28.8% of UG mentioned self-development and broadening of horizons; 19.3% of PG compared with 16.2% of UG mentioned access to foreign literature, cinema and theatre; 7.2% of PG compared with 4.2% of UG mentioned an increased awareness of one's own language and/or culture.

8.2.2 Subjects' reasons for wanting to know better languages that they already knew

Tables 164 and 165 show the distribution of reasons given by UG and PG respectively for wanting to know better a language/languages that they already knew. Because subjects often specified more than one reason, and in some cases in respect of more than one language, it is necessary to focus on the distribution of reasons (rather than the percentages of subjects giving different reasons) in order to establish broad trends across all languages. In the language-specific chapters that follow reasons are discussed in terms of the percentages/proportions of subjects specifying them. The key to Tables 164 and 165 is as follows:

1 Conversation
  1.1 travel abroad/holidays
  1.2 conferences/academic situations
  1.3 work/business
  1.4 social purposes

2 Practical value
  2.1 listen to radio, news media
  2.2 career purposes
  2.3 general study purposes

3 Reading
  3.1 technical/academic
  3.2 literature

4 General interest
  4.1 self-improvement
  4.2 pleasure
  4.3 for the sake of knowledge
  4.4 challenge of learning

5 Importance of the language
  5.1 within EEC/internationally
  5.2 to gain access to other languages/literatures
  5.3 to understand other peoples/cultures
  5.4 as part of one's cultural heritage

6 Special interests
    6.1 liking for the language
    6.2 liking for the sounds of the language
    6.3 have friends in country or who speak the language
    6.4 personal reasons
    6.5 cultural reasons
    6.6 the language is easy to learn
    6.7 already have some knowledge of the language

Except in one respect the pattern that emerges from Tables 164 and 165 is very similar to the pattern emerging from Table 163 (subjects' views on the advantages of knowing second languages, 8.2.1). The use of languages for conversational purposes accounts for 41.6% of UG responses but only 30.1% of PG responses. This divergence is largely accounted for by two factors: UG specified general conversational use and using languages for purposes of work/business more frequently than PG. Reasons to do with the practical value of languages account for 13.3% of PG responses but only 4.8% of UG responses: in particular PG specified career and general study purposes more frequently than UG (this is the one significant point of contrast with Table 163, 8.2.1). Whereas reading accounts for 8.0% of UG responses, it accounts for 15.9% of PG responses, the largest factor in this divergence being the proportion of PG responses specifying an interest in literature. General interests account for 5.2% of UG responses and 8.8% of PG responses. The importance of languages accounts for 21.0% of UG responses and 12.3% of PG responses, UG giving greater prominence to the importance of languages within the EEC/internationally. Special interests were almost equally important for both groups, accounting for 19.0% of UG responses and 19.8% of PG responses.

Comparing the different languages with one another, the widest spread of reasons in both Table 164 and Table 165 attaches to French and German. This is predictable in view of the numbers of subjects interested in improving their knowledge of these two languages (French: UG 171, PG 116; German: UG 66, PG 49). The somewhat smaller spread of reasons attaching to Spanish and Italian among PG (Table 165) is probably to be explained chiefly in terms of the smaller numbers of

TABLE 164 Distribution of reasons given by UG subjects who knew Irish, French, German, Spanish, Italian for wanting to know those languages better. Percentages refer to the total number of reasons given in respect of each language.

	Irish (87)	French (273)	German (100)	Spanish (22)	Italian (18)	Total (500)
1.0	6.9%	15.4%	--	4.6%	16.7%	10.4%
1.1	---	26.4%	26.0%	40.9%	27.8%	22.4%
1.2	---	0.4%	1.0%	---	---	0.4%
1.3	---	7.3%	13.0%	18.2%	---	7.0%
1.4	---	0.7%	4.0%	4.6%	---	1.4%
2.0	---	2.6%	---	9.1%	---	1.8%
2.1	1.2%	---	3.0%	---	---	0.8%
2.2	3.5%	0.7%	1.0%	---	---	1.2%
2.3	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	---	---	1.0%
3.0	2.3%	2.6%	1.0%	---	11.1%	2.4%
3.1	3.5%	1.5%	4.0%	---	---	2.2%
3.2	2.3%	4.8%	2.0%	---	---	3.4%
4.0	---	0.7%	1.0%	---	---	0.6%
4.1	1.2%	1.5%	2.0%	---	5.6%	1.6%
4.2	---	1.8%	2.0%	---	---	1.4%
4.3	---	1.1%	3.0%	---	5.6%	1.4%
4.4	---	---	1.0%	---	---	0.2%
5.0	---	---	---	---	---	---
5.1	---	12.5%	12.0%	---	---	9.2%
5.2	---	---	---	---	---	---
5.3	1.2%	2.6%	2.0%	4.6%	---	2.2%
5.4	55.2%	---	---	---	---	9.6%
6.0	---	---	---	---	---	---
6.1	13.8%	6.2%	9.0%	4.6%	---	7.8%
6.2	2.3%	1.1%	1.0%	---	11.1%	1.6%
6.3	---	2.2%	5.0%	4.6%	---	2.4%
6.4	2.3%	0.7%	1.0%	---	5.6%	1.2%
6.5	1.2%	1.5%	---	---	5.6%	1.2%
6.6	---	---	1.0%	---	11.1%	0.6%
6.7	2.3%	4.8%	4.0%	9.1%	---	4.2%

TABLE 165 Distribution of reasons given by PG subjects who knew Irish, French, German, Spanish, Italian for wanting to know those languages better. Percentages refer to the total number of reasons given in respect of each language

	Irish (75)	French (205)	German (97)	Spanish (39)	Italian (43)	Total (459)
1.0	4.0%	5.4%	5.2%	7.7%	2.3%	5.0%
1.1	4.0%	25.4%	21.7%	15.4%	23.3%	20.0%
1.2	---	1.5%	1.0%	---	---	0.9%
1.3	1.3%	5.4%	4.1%	---	---	3.5%
1.4	1.3%	1.0%	---	---	---	0.7%
2.0	---	0.5%	1.0%	---	---	0.4%
2.1	---	2.0%	3.1%	---	4.7%	2.0%
2.2	10.7%	7.3%	3.1%	7.7%	2.3%	6.5%
2.3	---	2.9%	10.3%	---	9.3%	4.4%
3.0	---	2.9%	3.1%	2.6%	2.3%	2.4%
3.1	1.3%	3.9%	7.2%	2.6%	2.3%	3.9%
3.2	12.0%	7.8%	11.3%	7.7%	11.6%	9.6%
4.0	---	2.9%	2.1%	---	---	1.7%
4.1	2.7%	6.3%	3.1%	5.1%	2.3%	4.6%
4.2	---	1.5%	1.0%	---	---	0.9%
4.3	1.3%	0.5%	1.0%	2.6%	---	0.9%
4.4	---	0.5%	2.1%	---	---	0.7%
5.0	---	---	---	---	---	---
5.1	1.3%	4.9%	3.1%	2.6%	---	3.3%
5.2	1.3%	0.5%	---	---	2.3%	0.7%
5.3	---	2.0%	3.1%	5.1%	4.7%	2.4%
5.4	32.0%	0.5%	1.0%	---	2.3%	5.9%
6.0	1.3%	0.5%	---	---	---	0.4%
6.1	4.0%	2.0%	1.0%	7.7%	7.0%	3.1%
6.2	1.3%	1.0%	---	2.6%	2.3%	1.1%
6.3	---	1.5%	---	2.6%	2.3%	1.1%
6.4	1.3%	0.5%	1.0%	2.6%	---	0.9%
6.5	2.7%	2.4%	3.1%	5.1%	2.3%	2.8%
6.6	2.7%	1.0%	2.1%	12.8%	4.7%	2.8%
6.7	13.3%	5.9%	5.2%	7.7%	11.6%	7.6%

subjects interested in these languages: the reasons not given for both Spanish and Italian are among those specified least often for French and German with the exception of 5.1, the importance of the language within the EEC/internationally. Among UG the spread of reasons given for wanting to know Spanish and Italian better is very narrow and greatest prominence is given to oral/transactional use of the two languages in travel abroad/ holidays or in work/business. Spanish especially seems to be thought of as a holiday language. Three features of UG responses for Italian stand out from those for all other languages (Table 164): 11.1% of responses specified an interest in reading Italian generally (the next highest percentage for this category is 2.6% for French); 11.1% of responses expressed a liking for the sounds of Italian (the next highest figure for this category is 2.3% for Irish), and 11.1% of responses implied that Italian was easy to learn (only one other language, German, drew this response, and from a single subject). This may imply a stereotype of Italian as a musical and poetic language that is easy to learn. However, the small numbers of subjects responding for Spanish (UG 17, PG 21) and Italian (UG 14, PG 21) make it necessary to treat these results with caution.

Finally, the position of Irish in relation to the other languages requires brief comment. Although in straightforward numerical terms it is the second most popular language after French, the spread of reasons that subjects gave for wanting to know Irish better is markedly narrower than the spread of reasons given in respect of French and German. By far the most frequently given reason for wanting to know Irish better is the importance of the language as part of subjects' cultural heritage, which accounts for 55.2% of UG and 32.0% of PG responses. Career purposes accounted for 10.7% of PG but only 3.5% of UG responses, while the desire to read Irish literature accounted for 12.0% of PG but only 2.3% of UG responses. It seems that the cultural importance that subjects attached to Irish did not extend to oral communication for transactional or social purposes: reasons associated with oral communication are very poorly represented in the Irish column in Tables 164 and 165.

8.2.3 Subjects' reasons for wanting to know languages they did not already know

Tables 166 and 167 show the distribution of reasons given by UG and PG respectively for wanting to know languages that they did not already know. The key to the tables is the same as for Tables 164 and 165 (see 8.2.2 above). As with the reasons subjects gave for wanting to know better a language/languages that they already knew, so here the reasons given in respect of each language are discussed in terms of the percentages of subjects giving them in the language-specific chapters that follow. In Tables 166 and 167 as in Tables 164 and 165 focus on the distribution of reasons makes it possible to discern broad trends across all languages.

TABLE 166 Distribution of reasons given by UG subjects who did not know Irish, French, German, Spanish, Italian for wanting to know those languages. Percentages refer to the total number of reasons given in respect of each language.

	Irish (13)	French (14)	German (126)	Spanish (61)	Italian (52)	Total (266)
1.0	15.4%	7.1%	13.5%	16.4%	15.4%	14.3%
1.1	---	42.9%	22.2%	19.7%	34.6%	24.1%
1.2	---	---	0.8%	---	---	0.4%
1.3	---	---	15.9%	1.6%	5.8%	9.0%
1.4	---	---	---	---	---	---
2.0	---	---	0.8%	4.9%	3.9%	2.3%
2.1	---	---	---	---	---	---
2.2	---	---	0.8%	1.6%	---	0.8%
2.3	---	---	0.8%	---	1.9%	0.8%
3.0	---	---	5.6%	3.3%	3.9%	4.1%
3.1	---	7.1%	2.4%	1.6%	1.9%	2.3%
3.2	---	14.3%	3.2%	4.9%	9.6%	5.3%
4.0	---	---	0.8%	1.6%	---	0.8%
4.1	---	---	0.8%	---	---	0.4%
4.2	---	---	0.8%	3.3%	---	1.1%
4.3	---	7.1%	0.8%	3.3%	---	1.5%
4.4	---	---	---	1.6%	---	0.4%
5.0	---	---	---	---	---	---
5.1	---	14.3%	15.9%	11.5%	7.7%	12.4%
5.2	---	---	---	1.6%	---	0.4%
5.3	23.1%	7.1%	4.8%	3.3%	---	4.5%
5.4	46.2%	---	---	---	---	2.3%
6.0	---	---	---	---	---	---
6.1	---	---	3.2%	1.6%	5.8%	3.0%
6.2	---	---	0.8%	3.3%	1.9%	1.5%
6.3	---	---	4.8%	9.8%	3.9%	5.3%
6.4	---	---	---	---	---	---
6.5	15.4%	---	0.8%	1.6%	3.9%	2.3%
6.6	---	---	0.8%	1.6%	---	0.8%
6.7	---	---	---	1.6%	---	0.4%

TABLE 167 Distribution of reasons given by PG subjects who did not know Irish, French, German, Spanish, Italian for wanting to know those languages. Percentages refer to the total number of reasons given in respect of each language.

	Irish (13)	French (27)	German (104)	Spanish (43)	Italian (54)	Total (241)
1.0	---	---	1.0%	2.3%	---	0.8%
1.1	7.7%	37.0%	27.9%	37.2%	29.6%	29.9%
1.2	---	---	---	---	---	---
1.3	---	3.7%	5.8%	---	---	2.9%
1.4	---	3.7%	1.0%	---	---	0.8%
2.0	---	---	---	---	---	---
2.1	---	---	1.0%	2.3%	3.7%	1.7%
2.2	30.8%	---	6.7%	2.3%	3.7%	5.8%
2.3	7.7%	11.1%	6.7%	---	1.9%	5.0%
3.0	---	---	1.0%	2.3%	---	0.8%
3.1	---	---	7.7%	---	1.9%	3.7%
3.2	---	3.7%	2.9%	4.7%	7.4%	4.1%
4.0	7.7%	---	5.8%	2.3%	3.7%	4.1%
4.1	7.7%	11.1%	3.9%	4.7%	5.6%	5.4%
4.2	---	---	---	2.3%	3.7%	1.2%
4.3	---	---	1.9%	---	---	0.8%
4.4	---	---	1.0%	2.3%	---	0.8%
5.0	---	---	---	---	---	---
5.1	---	14.8%	7.7%	9.3%	3.7%	7.5%
5.2	---	---	---	---	1.9%	0.4%
5.3	15.4%	7.4%	8.7%	16.3%	11.1%	10.8%
5.4	15.4%	---	---	---	---	0.8%
6.0	---	---	---	2.3%	---	0.4%
6.1	7.7%	---	1.0%	---	---	0.8%
6.2	---	---	1.0%	---	---	0.4%
6.3	---	---	1.0%	7.0%	1.9%	2.1%
6.4	---	3.7%	3.9%	---	---	2.1%
6.5	---	3.7%	2.9%	2.3%	13.0%	5.0%
6.6	---	---	---	---	5.6%	1.2%
6.7	---	---	---	---	1.9%	0.4%

As with Tables 164 and 165, the overall pattern that emerges from Tables 166 and 167 is very similar to the pattern emerging from Table 163 (subjects' views on the advantages of knowing second languages, 8.2.1 above). The use of languages for conversational purposes accounts for 47.8% of UG responses but only 34.4% of PG responses. These figures are broadly similar to those in respect of languages that subjects knew but said they would like to know better (cp. 8.2.2 above); and the divergence between UG and PG is largely due to the same two factors: 14.3%

of UG responses but only 0.8% of PG responses focussed on general conversational use, and 9.0% of UG responses but only 2.9% of PG responses focussed on the use of languages for purposes of work/business. Reasons to do with the practical value of languages account for only 3.9% of UG responses but 12.5% of PG responses; as with languages that subjects knew but said they would like to know better, so here PG specified career and general study purposes more frequently than UG (again, this is the one significant point of contrast with Table 163, 8.2.1). Reading accounts for 11.7% of UG and 8.6% of PG responses (in the case of languages that subjects knew but said they would like to know better there was a difference of some 7% between the two groups). General interests account for 4.2% of UG but 12.3% of PG responses. The importance of languages accounts for 19.6% of UG and 19.5% of PG responses, UG again giving somewhat greater prominence than PG to the importance of languages within the EEC/internationally. Special interests also were once more almost equally important to both groups, accounting for 13.3% of UG and 12.4% of PG responses.

Amongst UG subjects German and Spanish had the widest spread of reasons. Travel abroad/holidays and general conversation were prominent among the reasons given for wanting to know both languages: 22.2% and 13.5% respectively for German; 19.7% and 16.4% respectively for Spanish. The importance of the language within the EEC/internationally was also a substantial factor in either case, accounting for 15.9% of responses in respect of German and 11.5% in respect of Spanish. However, whereas work/business accounted for 15.9% of responses in respect of German, it accounted for only 1.6% of responses in respect of Spanish. For Italian travel abroad/holidays (34.6%) and general conversation (15.4%) were the dominant reasons that subjects gave for wanting to know the language. Like Spanish, Italian was not strongly associated with work/business opportunities (5.8% of UG responses). French and Irish, with the smallest number of subjects wanting to know them, elicited the smallest spread of reasons. For French the most significant reasons were travel abroad/holidays (42.9%), literature (14.3%), and the importance of the language within the EEC/internationally (14.3%); for Irish they were cultural heritage (46.2%) and cultural understanding (23.1%).

Among PG subjects German had the widest spread of reasons, with travel abroad/holidays accounting for 27.9% of responses. For Spanish and Italian travel abroad/holidays was the dominant reason (37.2% and 29.6% of responses respectively), and the next most frequently specified reason was cultural understanding (16.3% for Spanish and 11.1% for Italian). As in the case of UG, so with PG the smallest spread of reasons attached to French and Irish. The dominant reason given for wanting to know French was travel abroad/holidays (37.0%); the dominant reason given for wanting to know Irish was career considerations (30.8%), with scarcely a mention of reasons that would involve the use of the language for purposes of everyday oral communication.

8.3 CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH SUBJECTS ENVISAGED USING SECOND LANGUAGES

95.8% of UG (230/240) and 95.2% of PG (197/207) reported that they would like to know better a language/languages they already knew and/or would like to know a language/languages they did not already know. Table 168 shows the circumstances in which these subjects envisaged using second languages. In view of the findings reported in 8.2 it is hardly surprising that tourism is by far the most frequently envisaged circumstance of use, substantially more popular even than emerged from Tables 164-167. Academic work/research occupies a similar position here to the position that emerged in 8.2: not a majority interest, but a significant minority of PG subjects apparently believed that proficiency in second languages could enhance their study options. Likewise cultural pursuits are a minority interest whose individual character again seems to have appealed more to PG than to UG subjects. By contrast, the popularity of reading/literature, work/business (especially among PG subjects), and conversation with relatives or friends emerges in Table 168 with a strength that one would not have predicted on the basis of the findings reported in 8.2. Finally, it is worth noting that the minimal rating given to write/correspond is reinforced by the fact that all the other activities mentioned in Table 168 could be pursued successfully without recourse to the writing skill (among them academic work/research and work/business are perhaps the areas most likely to require the writing skill).

TABLE 168 Percentages of subjects reporting that they would like to know better a language/languages they already knew and/or would like to know a language/languages they did not already know who envisaged using second languages in different circumstances

	UG (230)	PG (197)
As tourist/with tourists	72.6%	95.4%
Reading/literature	47.0%	61.9%
Academic work/research	7.4%	17.8%
Work/business	44.8%	48.2%
Conversation with relatives/friends	35.2%	34.5%
Cultural pursuits	5.2%	9.1%
Write/correspond	0.4%	2.5%
Generally	3.9%	0.0%
No response	13.9%	14.7%

Table 169 shows when subjects who reported that they would like to know better or would like to know Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian envisaged using those languages. Very few subjects seem to have wanted urgently to use their chosen language(s). Among both UG and PG more subjects wanted to use French and Irish now and in the future than wanted to use them only in the future; whereas more subjects wanted to use German, Spanish and Italian in the future than wanted to use them now and in the future. A possible explanation for this difference is that many more subjects had learned French and Irish than had learned any other languages, so that French any Irish were the languages that most subjects were likely to envisage using now as well as in the future.

TABLE 169 Percentages of subjects reporting that they would like to know better a language/languages they already knew and/or would like to know a language/languages they did not know who envisaged using second languages "now", "in future", and "both"

		UG (230)	
	now	in future	both
Irish	2.6%	4.3%	11.7%
French	1.7%	20.4%	24.8%
German	1.3%	31.7%	20.0%
Spanish	0.4%	13.9%	8.3%
Italian	0.4%	10.4%	5.7%
		PG (197)	
	now	in future	both
Irish	2.0%	1.5%	8.6%
French	4.1%	10.2%	23.9%
German	4.6%	23.4%	19.8%
Spanish	1.5%	8.6%	7.6%
Italian	2.5%	11.7%	7.1%

8.4 EXPRESSED NEEDS FOR SECOND LANGUAGES

The data presented so far on subjects' attitudes to second languages concern what they said they would like to know. A high percentage of subjects reporting that they would like to know better a language/languages they already knew or would like to know a language/languages they did not already know also reported a need to know languages other than their first language: UG 80.4% (185/230), PG 83.2% (164/197). Tables 170-172 show the percentages of subjects giving different reasons for their need to know languages other than their first language under three broad headings: "study", "work/employment/career", "personal". As Table 170 indicates, when the focus of our questions was need rather than would like, academic reasons became more prominent, especially among UG (cf. Tables 164-167, 8.2.2 and 8.2.3). The fact that among PG the most frequently specified need was to read periodicals, technical reports and academic papers and the second most frequently specified need was for their degree suggests that a solid minority of PG recognized a need to carry their research beyond the limits of monolingualism. By contrast, the fact that UG seemed relatively uncertain of specific needs may simply mean that they lacked the experience of PG. There is some support for this speculation in Table 171. Similar percentages of UG and PG expressed a need to know languages other than their first language for purposes of work/career. But whereas UG needs were expressed mostly in general terms, PG needs were expressed with a certain degree of differentiation. From Table 172 we see, perhaps predictably, that the shift of emphasis from "would like" to "need" causes much less prominence to be given to knowing second languages for purposes of travel abroad and holidays (cp. 8.2.2 and 8.2.3: Tables 164-167).

TABLE 170 Percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who gave different aspects of study as the reason for their need

	UG (185)	PG (164)
General answer	18.9%	18.3%
Degree	6.0%	11.0%
Literature	2.7%	1.2%
Read textbooks	4.3%	0.6%
Read journals, technical reports, papers	2.2%	14.6%
Knowledge of foreign sources	0.5%	2.4%
Research	0.0%	5.5%
Combination of above	6.0%	3.0%
Communication with other students	0.0%	0.0%

TABLE 171 Percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who gave different aspects of work/employment/career as the reason for their need

	UG (185)	PG (164)
General answer	36.8%	17.7%
Teaching	6.0%	11.0%
Career - research	13.5%	17.7%
Communication with foreign colleagues	1.1%	6.7%
Read foreign documents, journals etc.	1.6%	5.5%
Contact with foreign business people	4.9%	4.3%
Translation	0.0%	2.4%
Combination of above	7.0%	1.8%

TABLE 172 Percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who gave different personal reasons for their need

	UG (185)	PG (164)
General answer	18.9%	25.0%
Travel	14.6%	14.6%
Holidays	4.3%	6.1%
Communication with friends	12.4%	12.8%
Pleasure/interest	6.5%	5.5%
Enjoyment/fulfilment of knowing languages	1.1%	5.5%
Reading/literature	3.8%	3.1%
Combination of above	15.1%	3.7%
Self-improvement	1.1%	0.0%

Table 173 shows subjects' expression of second language needs in terms of the four language skills - understanding speech, speaking, reading, and writing. The oral/aural skills were most in demand, though in the case of PG only by the narrowest of margins. Writing is the skill for which the least need was reported. However, subjects felt a much more frequent need for the writing skill than the reasons they gave for wanting to know second languages would lead one to expect (cf. Tables 164-

167, 8.2.2 and 8.2.3). This may well be a result of the bias towards textual learning materials and written learning activities that seems to have characterized language learning at school for most of them (cf. Tables 33 and 36, 1.3.2). Table 174 shows how all subjects assessed the relative importance of the oral/aural and reading/ writing skills. The fact that only a tiny minority gave precedence to reading and writing skills coincides with the tendency of all the other data presented so far on the use to which subjects would put their knowledge of second languages. It may reflect not so much our subjects' greater practical need either for the oral/aural skills or for all four skills as their assumption that reading and writing skills are consequent on oral/aural skills. Table 174, which summarizes the views of all subjects, shows markedly less interest in the reading and writing skills than does Table 173, which summarizes the views of subjects who felt a need to know languages other than their first language.

TABLE 173 Percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who specified a need for each of the language skills

	UG (185)	PG (164)
Understanding speech	87.0%	88.4%
Speaking	91.9%	89.6%
Reading	72.4%	86.0%
Writing	68.6%	64.6%
No response	0.0%	0.0%

TABLE 174 Percentages of all subjects finding different combinations of language skills important in second languages

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
Listening and speaking	47.1%	46.9%
Reading and writing	2.1%	2.9%
All skills important	48.3%	36.7%
No response	2.5%	13.5%

8.5 PROSPECTS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

Of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language 83.8% of UG (155/185) and 90.9% of PG (149/164) also reported that they intended to take steps to fulfil their need. These figures are encouragingly high. Table 175 shows when subjects intended taking steps to fulfil their need. In general PG seem to have been more positive in their attitude than UG: 26.9% of PG but only 10.3% of UG reported that they intended taking steps within the next six months; and 24.8% of PG but only 13.6% of UG gave an unspecific but hopeful response. On the other hand rather more UG than PG said that they intended taking steps in the more distant future.

TABLE 175 Percentages of subjects reporting that they intended taking steps to fulfil their need to know a language/languages other than their first language who gave different estimates of when they would take those steps

	UG (155)	PG (149)
1-4 months	6.5%	12.1%
4-6 months	3.9%	14.8%
6-9 months/next year	16.8%	4.0%
1 year	12.9%	10.1%
1-2 years	16.1%	14.8%
2-5 years	10.3%	4.7%
Longer	1.9%	0.7%
Not definite/as soon as possible/ depends	13.6%	24.8%
Studying now	12.3%	14.8%
No response	5.8%	0.0%

8.6 APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

8.6.1 Preferred methods of teaching/learning

Table 176 shows all subjects' reported preferences among five general approaches to teaching. The comparatively even spread of figures across the different approaches tends to confirm the intuition that multi-media presentation offers the best chance of success in any teaching situation, since it is likely to cater for the widest range of individual preferences. It may be that the use of drawings and of speech situations in which the learner is not a participant come at the bottom of the list simply because they are the ones that subjects had least often used. The relative prominence given to speech situations in which the learner is a participant coincides neatly with a fundamental tenet of the communicative approach to language teaching: that learning is most likely to take place when the target language is used as a vehicle of meaningful communication.

TABLE 176 Percentages of all subjects expressing preference for different approaches to teaching

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
Explanation with drawings	21.3%	18.8%
Oral explanation	37.9%	33.3%
Written explanation	34.2%	40.6%
Explanation in a speech situation you can observe	28.3%	27.1%
Explanation in a speech situation in which you can participate	38.8%	36.7%
No response	21.7%	20.8%

TABLE 177 Percentages of all subjects expressing preference for different methods of learning

	UG (N=240)	PG (N=207)
Write it down	62.5%	61.4%
Listen to it	27.9%	35.3%
Read written explanation	23.8%	32.9%
Repeat it aloud	32.1%	44.0%
No response	22.1%	19.3%

Table 177 summarizes all subjects' reported preferences among four different approaches to learning. The prominence given to writing is to be expected in view of the position it occupies in Western educational systems. Perhaps more significant is the fact that oral repetition is the next most favoured approach among both UG and PG. The reason for this may well be the prominence given to oral repetition in subjects' previous language learning experience; but it suggests that language laboratory drills may bear some relation to spontaneously deployed learning strategies.

8.6.2 Choice of course

Table 178 shows the percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who expressed preference for different arrangements for language learning. In general subjects preferred courses involving a teacher to self-instruction, though significant minorities of both UG and PG were prepared to learn from course book and tapes/discs or from course book and television programmes. Also, subjects preferred to be taught in a group rather than individually, and among both UG and PG there was a marked preference for taught courses that included the use of a language laboratory over taught courses that did not. These results provide some encouragement for a system of self-instruction based on the language laboratory, though subjects' strong preference for group work over individual work implies that self-instructional learners need to be given an opportunity to meet other learners to discuss commmon problems and share insights into the learning process, perhaps within a framework of learner counselling.

TABLE 178 Percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who expressed preference for different arrangements for language learning

	UG (185)	PG (164)
Teacher + group	38.4%	36.6%
Teacher + individual	18.4%	21.3%
Teacher + language lab + group	51.4%	44.5%
Teacher + language lab + individual	15.1%	18.9%
Self-instruction using books only	6.5%	9.8%
Self-instruction using books + tapes/discs	28.7%	34.2%
Radio course + book	8.1%	8.5%
Television course + book	12.4%	17.1%
No response	0.0%	1.8%

Table 179 shows the percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who gave different reasons for preferring one type of language course to another. Three things emerge clearly: UG and PG placed roughly equal emphasis on the importance of learning as a member of a group; UG were twice as concerned as PG that they needed the expert guidance of a teacher; and UG were more than

TABLE 179 Percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who gave different reasons for preferring particular kinds of language course

	UG (185)	PG (164)
Teacher needed as expert/guide	41.1%	21.3%
Group motivates	10.3%	14.0%
Group provides chance to learn from others' mistakes	7.6%	4.9%
Group good for conversation	13.0%	14.0%
Group provides companionship/ enjoyment	6.0%	4.9%
Depends on teacher	1.6%	1.2%
Depends on group/ homogeneity	0.0%	3.1%
Depends on methods/ books	0.5%	1.8%
Flexibility	2.2%	1.2%
Can learn at own pace	5.4%	9.2%
Can learn at own convenience	8.1%	11.0%
Easily available	6.5%	5.5%
Good teaching aids	5.4%	8.5%
Low costs	2.7%	1.8%
Good for basic skills	3.2%	6.1%
Individual tuition and effort preferred	7.6%	4.3%
Individual attention possible/important	5.4%	1.2%
Personal communication important	2.2%	4.9%
Avoids embarrassment/ inhibition	2.7%	3.7%
Close to real-life situations	3.8%	1.8%
Good for pronunciation/intonation	21.6%	9.2%
Inconvenient	0.0%	0.6%
Boring	0.0%	1.8%
Most effective/ practical	13.5%	1.2%
This is what one is used to	6.0%	0.0%
Easier to concentrate	1.1%	0.0%
Depends on what is available at time	2.2%	0.0%
Would like to try	0.5%	0.0%
No response	11.4%	22.6%

twice as concerned as PG with questions of pronunciation and intonation (this may be because for them the experience of learning languages at school was more recent than for PG).

Table 180 shows percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who said they would consult different institutions/individuals when choosing a language course. UG and PG broadly agreed in giving greatest prominence to people with experience either of a particular course or of language learning generally; and to teaching establishments and their publicity materials. UG gave much greater prominence than PG to "third parties" and "personnel department of place where language may be used". Relatively few subjects said they would consult no one. The higher percentage of those who did occurred among PG.

TABLE 180 Percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who said they would consult different people/institutions when choosing a language course

	UG (185)	PG (164)
Person with experience of a certain course	49.7%	43.3%
Person with experience of language learning	48.1%	40.2%
Publicity of teaching establishments	28.6%	34.1%
One teaching establishment	6.5%	11.6%
More than one teaching establishment	35.7%	33.5%
Subject's lecturer/ employer/superior	10.3%	15.2%
Third parties	33.0%	15.9%
Personnel department of place where language may be used	17.8%	8.5%
No one	11.4%	15.9%
No response	0.0%	1.2%

8.6.3 The location of language courses that subjects were following/would like to follow

Table 181 shows the location of language courses that subjects reporting that they would like to know better a language/ languages that they already knew and/or would like to know a language/languages that they did not already know, said they were following or would like to follow. Most responses indicated courses where subjects were living or near to where they were living. The category "Where the language is spoken" (which includes this country for Irish and English) is more strongly represented among those who intended to follow a language course at some time in the future than among those who were already learning. This may indicate that when a course of learning is actually embarked upon, financial and other practical considerations play a dominant role.

TABLE 181 Percentages of all subjects reporting that they would like to know better a language/languages that they did not already know and/or would like to know a language/languages that they did not already know who gave different locations for the language course(s) they were following/would like to follow

Were following

	UG (230)	PG (197)
Where you live	16.5%	17.3%
Near where you live	14.8%	15.2%
Elsewhere in your own country	6.1%	5.6%
Where the language is spoken	6.5%	9.1%
No response	62.6%	58.4%

Would like to follow

	UG (230)	PG (197)
Where you live	23.0%	28.9%
Near where you live	23.9%	26.9%
Elsewhere in your own country	7.8%	5.6%
Where the language is spoken	14.8%	11.2%
No response	39.1%	33.0%

8.6.4 Travel to country/region where the target language is native and contact with native speakers of the target language during the course of learning

The overwhelming majority of subjects who reported a need to know a language/languages other than their first language said they would like to visit a country/region where their target language is native during their course of language learning: UG 97.8% (181/185), PG 92.1% (151/164). All UG and the overwhelming majority of PG in the same category (93.3% - 153/164) said that they would like to meet or speak with native speakers of their target language. These responses coincide with the very positive attitude towards second languages in general reported in 8.1 above. But they also imply a commitment to oral communication through the target language(s) which was much less strongly expressed in subjects' stated reasons for wanting a knowledge of second languages (cf. 8.2 above) and in their view of the circumstances in which they would use second languages (cf. 8.3 above).

Table 182 shows the different periods of time specified for residence in a country/region where their target language is native by those subjects who favoured such residence during their course of language learning. It is perhaps significant that the specific periods most frequently named by both UG and PG, 1-3 months and 6-12 months, are respectively the minimum period in which substantial learning is likely to be achieved and the period most likely to be associated with short-term work contracts. The tendency of subjects to prefer longer to shorter periods of residence is repeated in their clear preference for longer over shorter unspecified periods of residence.

TABLE 182 Percentages of subjects reporting that they would like to spend time in a country/region where their target language is native during their course of language learning who specified different periods of such residence

	UG (181)	PG (151)
0-3 weeks	2.8%	8.0%
3 weeks-1 month	7.7%	10.6%
1-3 months	24.3%	21.2%
3-6 months	7.2%	4.0%
6 months-1 year	22.1%	17.2%
1-2 years	9.4%	4.0%
2-3 years	3.3%	4.0%
Indeterminate short period	3.9%	8.6%
Indeterminate long period	16.0%	21.2%
No response	2.8%	1.3%

TABLE 183 Percentages of subjects reporting that they would like to meet/speak with native speakers of their target language who specified different stages of learning at which they would like to visit a country/region where their target language is in general use

	UG (185)	PG (153)
At the start, early, initial stage, now	26.5%	26.1%
When basic knowledge has been established (1 month-1 year)	25.9%	20.3%
At intermediate stage (1-2 years)	22.2%	25.5%
At advanced stage	5.4%	8.5%
At final stage	4.3%	5.2%
At any stage	13.5%	13.7%
No response	2.2%	0.7%

TABLE 184 Percentages of subjects reporting that they would like to meet/speak with native speakers of their target language who specified different stages of learning at which they would like to meet/speak with native speakers

	UG (185)	PG (153)
At the start, early, initial stage, now	27.6%	33.3%
When basic knowledge has been established (6 months-1 year)	21.1%	18.3%
At intermediate stage (1-2 years)	20.0%	22.9%
At advanced stage	10.3%	7.2%
At final stage	4.3%	3.9%
At any stage	15.1%	14.4%
No response	1.6%	0.0%

Table 183 shows at what stage in their course of language learning subjects reporting that they would like to meet/speak with native speakers of their target language said they would like to visit a country/region where their target language is in general use. Table 184 shows at what stage in their course of language learning subjects in the same category said they wanted to have contact with native speakers of their target language. The same general picture emerges from both tables: travel to a country/region where the target language is spoken and contact with native speakers of the target language are seen much more often as accompanying different stages of the learning process than as something to be postponed until the desired level of proficiency in the target language has been achieved.

Finally, Table 185 shows that those subjects who had already visited a country/region where their target language is native were more likely than those who had not to want to repeat the experience or to meet native speakers of their target language as part of the language learning process.

TABLE 185 Desire to visit a country/region where the target language is native and to meet native speakers of the target language during the course of language learning: subjects who had already made such a visit compared with subjects who had not

Subjects who had already visited a country/region where their target language is native

UG who had visited country/ region where target language is native	UG in this category who wanted to repeat the experience	UG in this category who wanted to meet native speakers	PG who had visited country/ region where target language is native	PG in this category who wanted to repeat the experience	PG in this category who wanted to meet native speakers
203/240	163/203	164/203	187/207	138/187	140/187
84.6%	80.3%	80.8%	90.3%	73.8%	74.9%

Subjects who had not visited a country/region where their target language is native

UG who had not visited a country/ region where target language is native	UG in this category who wanted to make such a visit	UG in this category who wanted to meet native speakers	PG who had not visited a country/ region where target language is native	PG in this category who wanted to make such a visit	PG in this category who wanted to meet native speakers
37/240	21/37	21/37	20/240	13/20	13/20
15.4%	56.8%	56.8%	9.7%	65.0%	65.0%

Chapter 9

Interest in learning Irish

9.1 ATTITUDES TO IRISH

9.1.1 Subjects who reported that they knew Irish (cf. Tables 157-160, 8.1.1)

As we saw in Chapter 2, 83.8% of UG subjects (201/240) and 77.8% of PG subjects (161/207) reported that they had learned Irish at some stage. Of the UG who had learned Irish, 34.8% (70/201) said they would like to know the language better; of the PG who had learned Irish, 31.1% (50/161) said they would like to know the language better. These percentages compare very unfavourably with the percentages of subjects reporting that they knew French, German or Italian who said they would like to know these languages better and comparatively unfavourably with the percentage of subjects reporting that they knew Spanish who said they would like to know Spanish better (cf. Table 158, 8.1.1). Clearly Irish benefited less than fully from subjects' generally very positive attitude to second languages.

9.1.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know Irish (cf. Tables 161 and 162, 8.1.2)

Because of the position that Irish occupies in the school curriculum it was not expected that many subjects would be in a position to specify Irish in answer to the question "Are there any languages that you do not know but would like to know?" In fact Irish was specified by 4.6% of UG subjects (11/240) and by 5.3% of PG subjects (11/207). The UG group represented 28.2% (11/39) of UG subjects who did not report a knowledge of Irish, and the PG group represented 23.9% (11/46) of PG subjects who did not report a knowledge of Irish. These percentages compare unfavourably with the percentages of subjects reporting that they did not know French or German who said they would like to know these languages but are somewhat more encouraging than the percentages of subjects reporting that they did not know Spanish or Italian who said they would like to know Spanish or Italian (cf. Table 162, 8.1.2). Again Irish benefits less than fully from subjects' generally positive attitude to second languages, though less markedly than in the case of subjects who already knew Irish.

9.2 SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBJECTS WHO REPORTED THAT THEY KNEW IRISH BUT WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IT BETTER

9.2.1 Age at which learning had begun

Table 186 shows the ages at which subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better began learning the language, compared with all subjects who had learned Irish. Among UG the percentage of subjects reporting that they had begun learning the language before 4 years is higher for those who said they would like to know Irish better than for all learners of Irish; among PG, however, the reverse is the case. Whereas in both categories of UG subjects the same percentage reported that they had begun learning Irish between the ages of 4 and 10, PG who said they would like to know Irish better reported about 10% more often than all PG who had learned Irish that they had begun learning the language between the ages of 4 and 10. It should be noted that none of the handful of subjects who reported that they had begun learning Irish after the age of 10 said that they would like to know Irish better. The "no response" rates in Table 186 may be taken to indicate a higher level of interest among those who said they would like to know Irish better than among all learners of Irish.

TABLE 186 Age at which all subjects who knew Irish said they had begun learning the language, compared with age at which subjects who said they knew Irish but would like to know it better said they had begun learning the language

	All UG who had learned Irish (201)	UG who had learned Irish and would like to know it better (70)	All PG who had learned Irish (161)	PG who had learned Irish and would like to know it better (50)
Before 4 years	4.5%	10.0%	9.9%	6.0%
4-10 years	87.1%	87.1%	77.6%	88.0%
11-17 years	1.5%	---	3.1%	2.0%
After 17 years	---	---	---	---
No response	7.0%	2.9%	9.3%	4.0%

9.2.2 Situations/circumstances in which Irish had been learned

Of the UG subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better, 100.0% (70/70) reported that they had taken Irish at primary school and 100.0% (70/70) reported that they had taken Irish at post-primary school. Of the PG subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better, 96.0% (48/50) reported that they had taken Irish at primary school and 96.0% (48/50) reported that they had taken Irish at post-primary school.

Table 187 shows broadly similar patterns of circumstances/situations in which Irish had been learned, first by all learners of Irish and secondly by those who said they would like to know the language better. For UG who said they would like to know Irish better, the home environment and visits to/residence in the Gaeltacht were slightly less prominent than for all learners of Irish, while contact with friends/native speakers was slightly more prominent. For PG who said they would like to know Irish better, the home environment, contacts with friends/native speakers, university or other courses, and books/film/media/music were all rather more prominent than for all PG learners of Irish. Both UG and PG who said they would like to know Irish better mentioned school more frequently than the corresponding groups of all subjects who had learned Irish. Nevertheless it is clear from other data that a number of subjects simply overlooked school as a situation in which they had learned Irish.

TABLE 187 Situations/circumstances in which Irish had been learned by (a) all subjects who knew Irish and (b) subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better

	All UG who had learned Irish (201)	UG who had learned Irish and would like to know it better (70)	All PG who had learned Irish (161)	PG who had learned Irish and would like to know it better (50)
Home environment	23.9%	21.4%	19.9%	24.0%
School	72.1%	78.6%	84.5%	92.0%
Friends/native speakers	13.4%	15.7%	17.4%	20.0%
University or other course	---	---	8.1%	14.0%
Travel to/residence in Gaeltacht	14.9%	10.0%	10.6%	10.0%
Books and literature/ films/media/music	22.9%	22.9%	23.0%	30.0%
No response	6.5%	2.9%	8.1%	---

If one compares Table 187 with the corresponding tables for French and German, it emerges that travel to/residence in the

Gaeltacht was less significant for subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better than travel/residence abroad was for subjects who knew French or German but said they would like to know French/German better (cf. Table 197, 10.2.2 and Table 207, 11.2.2; but cf. also 9.2.6 below). On the other hand, the home environment figures much more prominently for Irish than for French and German. In this connexion it is worth noting that among those subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better, one UG and one PG had a father whose first language was Irish; one UG and one PG had a father who was bilingual in Irish and English; and two UG and two PG had a mother who was bilingual in Irish and English. Three UG and two PG reported experience of using Irish in a household, while two PG subjects reported that they were bringing up their children to speak Irish.

It is perhaps worth noting also that among UG who reported that they had learned Irish in other ways as well as at school, 34.8% (41/118) said they would like to know the language better, which is identical to the percentage of all UG reporting that they knew Irish who said they would like to know the language better; whereas 40.2% (33/82) of PG who reported that they had learned Irish in other ways as well as at school said they would like to know the language better, which exceeds the figure for all learners of Irish by 9%.

9.2.3 Irish as a medium of instruction (cf. Tables 27 and 28, 1.3.1; 2.3.1)

Of the UG subjects who had taken Irish at school and said they would like to know it better, 47.1% (33/70) reported that they had experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at primary level and 44.3% (31/70) reported that they had experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at post-primary level. These figures should be compared with those for all UG learners of Irish: 44.1% reported having experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at primary level and 43.9% reported having experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at post-primary level (cf. 2.3.1). Of the PG subjects who had taken Irish at primary level and said they would like to know it better, 43.8% (21/48) reported that they had experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at that level; and of the PG subjects who had taken Irish at post-primary level and said they would like to know it better, 31.3% (15/48) reported that they had experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at post-primary level. These figures should be compared with those for all PG learners of Irish: 45.5% reported having experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at primary level and 38.3% reported having experienced Irish as a medium of instruction at post-primary level. Whereas experience of Irish as a medium of instruction may have contributed to UG desires to know the language better, the reverse may be the case among PG.

9.2.4 Enjoyment (cf. Tables 40 and 41, 1.3.3)

Of UG subjects who said they would like to know Irish better and had taken Irish at school, 27.1% (19/70) reported that Irish was the language they had most enjoyed learning at primary school and 27.5% (19/69) reported that Irish was the language they had most enjoyed learning at post-primary school. The corresponding figures for all subjects who had taken Irish at school were 26.7% at primary level and 21.7% at post-primary level (cf. Tables 40 and 41, 1.3.3). Of PG subjects who said they would like to know Irish better and had taken Irish at school, 14.6% (7/48) reported that Irish was the language they had most enjoyed learning at primary school and 31.3% (15/48) reported that Irish was the language they had most enjoyed learning at post-primary school. The corresponding figures for all PG subjects who had taken Irish at school were 26.9% at primary level and 23.4% at post-primary level. Thus our data offer no consistent correlation between enjoyment of learning Irish in the past and a desire for a better knowledge of the language in the future.

9.2.5 Examination success in Irish

The majority of both UG and PG subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better reported that they had gained at least Grade C in the Leaving Certificate in Irish: UG 70.0% (49/70), PG 60.0% (30/50). The higher percentage for UG here may indicate that school experience influenced their attitude to further learning more strongly than it influenced PG attitudes. There is further evidence that academic attainment may have been among the factors that produced a positive attitude to Irish. Of the PG who had taken Irish at post-primary school, 51 reported that they had achieved an A or B grade in the Leaving Certificate in Irish (cf. Table 160). Of this subgroup 37.3% (19/51) said they would like to know Irish better, which is 6.2% higher than the percentage of all subjects reporting a knowledge of Irish who said they would like to know the language better (31.1% - 50/161). However, among UG subjects the percentage of those with A or B in the Leaving Certificate in Irish who said they would like to know Irish better was 34.0% (18/53), which is marginally less than the percentage of all subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better (35.4% - 70/198). Again our data do not reveal a consistent trend among UG and PG subjects.

9.2.6 Visits to the Gaeltacht

35.7% (25/70) of the UG and 40.0% (20/50) of the PG who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better reported that they had visited the Gaeltacht; the corresponding figures for all learners of Irish are: UG 38.3%, PG 31.7% (cf. 2.2.3). The majority of subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better and had visited the Gaeltacht reported that they had stayed not less than one month: UG 76.0% (19/25), PG 85.0% (17/20). Table 188 shows the communicative experience in the Gaeltacht reported by these subjects, compared with the communicative experience in the Gaeltacht reported by all subjects who knew Irish and had visited the Gaeltacht. Comparison between all learners of Irish and those who said they would like to know the language better reveals no clear pattern of divergence.

TABLE 188 Communicative experience in the Gaeltacht reported by subjects who knew Irish and had visited the Gaeltacht compared with the communicative experience in the Gaeltacht reported by subjects who said they would like to know Irish better and had visted the Gaeltacht

	All UG who had learned Irish (77)	UG who said they would like to know Irish better (25)	All PG who had learned Irish (51)	PG who said they would like to know Irish better (20)
Spoke Irish	58.4%	48.0%	62.7%	65.0%
were spoken to in Irish	72.7%	80.0%	62.7%	60.0%
Irish spoken in their company	84.4%	84.0%	72.5%	75.0%
Spoke Irish and own language	29.9%	24.0%	31.4%	30.0%
Spoken to in Irish and own language	22.1%	16.0%	27.5%	35.0%
Irish and own language spoken in their company	14.3%	12.0%	21.6%	20.0%

9.2.7 Subjects' assessment of their command of language skills in Irish (cf. 3.4.1)

Table 189 shows the percentages of all learners of Irish claiming competence in the four language skills in Irish compared with the percentages of subjects who said they would like to know Irish better claiming competence in the four skills in Irish. PG who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better were more confident in claiming competence in each of the four skills in Irish than were all PG who had learned Irish. UG who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better were marginally more confident than all UG who had learned Irish as regards understanding speech, speaking and writing, but marginally less confident as regards reading.

TABLE 189 Percentages of all subjects who knew Irish claiming competence in the four language skills in Irish, compared with percentages of subjects who said they would like to know Irish better claiming competence in the four language skills in Irish

	UG who knew Irish (201)	UG who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better (70)	PG who knew Irish (161)	PG who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better (50)
Understanding speech	92.5%	92.9%	85.7%	96.0%
Speaking	88.1%	91.4%	78.9%	80.0%
Reading	94.0%	92.9%	85.7%	92.0%
Writing	89.6%	92.9%	66.5%	74.0%

9.3 REASONS FOR WANTING TO KNOW IRISH BETTER/KNOW IRISH

9.3.1 Subjects who reported that they knew Irish but would like to know it better (cf. Tables 164 and 165, 8.2.2)

Table 190 shows the percentages of subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better reporting different reasons for wanting a better knowledge of the language. The comparatively narrow spread of reasons that subjects gave for wanting to know Irish better has already been commented on (Tables 164-165, 8.2.2). By far the most prominent of the reasons given was the importance of the language as part of Ireland's cultural heritage. This accounted for 55.2% of UG responses (48/87) and was mentioned by 68.6% of UG; while it accounted for 32.0% of PG responses (24/75) and was mentioned by 48.0% of PG. The high rating given to the cultural importance of Irish should be compared with the reason why most subjects wished to improve their knowledge of the continental European languages taught in Irish schools: a desire to use the language for purposes of work and travel/holidays abroad. It seems that among those who already knew Irish, an interest in further learning of the language was likely to be accompanied by a commitment to its cultural importance; since reasons associated with the use of the language as a medium of communication figure only marginally the emphasis seems likely to fall on past rather than present culture.

TABLE 190 Percentages of subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better reporting different reasons for wanting to improve their knowledge of the language

		UG (70)	PG (50)
1.0	Conversation generally	---	6.0%
1.1	Travel abroad/holidays	8.6%	6.0%
1.2	Conferences/academic situations	---	---
1.3	Work/business	---	2.0%
1.4	Social purposes	---	2.0%
2.0	Practical value generally	---	---
2.1	Listen to radio/news media	1.4%	---
2.2	Career purposes	4.3%	16.0%
2.3	General study purposes	1.4%	---
3.0	Reading generally	2.9%	---
3.1	Technical/academic	4.3%	2.0%
3.2	Literature	2.9%	18.0%
4.0	General interest	---	---
4.1	Self-improvement	1.4%	4.0%
4.2	Pleasure	---	---
4.3	For the sake of knowledge	---	2.0%
4.4	Challenge of learning	---	---
5.0	Importance of the language generally	---	---
5.1	Within EEC/internationally	---	2.0%
5.2	To gain access to other peoples/cultures	---	2.0%
5.3	To understand other peoples/cultures	1.4%	---
5.4	As part of one's cultural heritage	68.6%	48.0%
6.0	Special interests generally	---	2.0%
6.1	Liking for the language	17.1%	6.0%
6.2	Liking for the sounds of the language	2.9%	2.0%
6.3	Have friends in country or who speak the language	---	---
6.4	Personal reasons	2.9%	2.0%
6.5	Cultural reasons	1.4%	4.0%
6.6	The language is easy to learn	---	4.0%
6.7	Already have some knowledge of the language	2.9%	20.0%

9.3.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know but would like to know Irish (cf. Tables 166 and 167, 8.2.3)

TABLE 191 Proportions of subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Irish reporting different reasons for wanting to know the language

		UG (11)	PG (11)
1.0	Conversation generally	0.18	---
1.1	Travel abroad/holidays	---	0.09
1.2	Conferences/academic situations	---	---
1.3	Work/business	---	---
1.4	Social purposes	---	---
2.0	Practical value generally	---	---
2.1	Listen to radio/news media	---	---
2.2	Career purposes	---	0.46
2.3	General study purposes	---	0.09
3.0	Reading generally	---	---
3.1	Technical/academic	---	---
3.2	Literature	---	---
4.0	General interest	---	0.09
4.1	Self-improvement	---	0.09
4.2	Pleasure	---	---
4.3	For the sake of knowledge	---	---
4.4	Challenge of learning	---	---
5.0	Importance of the language generally	---	---
5.1	Within EEC/internationally	---	---
5.2	To gain access to other peoples/cultures	---	---
5.3	To understand other peoples/cultures	0.27	0.18
5.4	As part of one's cultural heritage	0.55	0.27
6.0	Special interests generally	---	---
6.1	Liking for the language	---	0.09
6.2	Liking for the sounds of the language	---	---
6.3	Have friends in country or who speak the language	---	---
6.4	Personal reasons	---	---
6.5	Cultural reasons	0.18	---
6.6	The language is easy to learn	---	---
6.7	Already have some knowledge of the language	---	---

Table 191 shows the proportions of subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Irish reporting different reasons for wanting to know the language. The UG in this category reflect a strong version of the tendency already noted among those who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better, focussing chiefly on the cultural importance of the language. At first sight it seems that this pattern is not repeated by the PG who said they did not know but would like to know Irish. They produced a broader spread of reasons than PG, and only 0.27 (3/11) specified its importance as part of their cultural heritage as a reason for wanting to know the language (two of these three subjects gave a second reason, in one case career requirements and in the other a liking for the language). However, 0.46 (5/11) said they needed Irish for career purposes; and since in many cases Irish is only a statutory and not a communicative career requirement, it is possible that these five subjects were referring to an aspect of the cultural importance of Irish and not expressing a desire to use the language as a medium of everyday communication.

9.4 CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH SUBJECTS ENVISAGED USING IRISH (cf. Tables 168 and 169, 8.3)

9.4.1 Subjects who reported that they knew Irish but would like to know it better

The circumstances in which use of the language was envisaged by subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better are shown in Table 192. Perhaps the most significant figures in this table are the "no response" percentages. In view of the dominance of the cultural importance of the language among the reasons subjects gave for wanting to know Irish better, it is perhaps not entirely fanciful to suggest that 50.0% of UG and 70.0% of PG could not think of any realistic circumstances in which they might use Irish. (It should be noted that the "no

TABLE 192 Percentages of subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better envisaging different circumstances in which they might use the language

	UG (70)	PG (50)
As tourist/with tourists	20.0%	8.0%
Reading/literature	34.3%	16.0%
Academic work/research	4.3%	---
Work/business	17.1%	12.0%
Conversation at home or with friends/relatives	22.9%	24.0%
Cultural pursuits	4.3%	---
Writing/correspondence	---	2.0%
Generally	4.3%	---
No response	50.0%	70.0%

response" figures here are higher, in most cases markedly so, than the corresponding "no response" figures for French, German, Spanish and Italian; see Tables 202, 212, 222, 232.)

Table 193 shows when subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better envisaged using the language. "Now and in the future" heavily outweighed the separate categories "now" and "in the future". But again the "no response" figures should be especially noted; for they are once more markedly higher than the corresponding "no response" figures for French, German, Spanish and Italian, and once more this may mean that subjects found it more difficult to envisage using Irish than to envisage using the other languages.

TABLE 193 When did subjects who knew Irish but said they would like to know it better envisage using the language?

	UG (70)	PG (50)
Now	1.4%	4.0%
In the future	8.6%	---
Now and in the future	28.6%	22.0%
No response	61.4%	74.0%

9.4.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know but would like to know Irish

TABLE 194 Numbers of subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Irish envisaging different circumstances in which they might use the language

	UG (11)	PG (11)
As tourist/with tourists	0.27	0.27
Reading/literature	0.46	0.55
Academic work/research	---	0.09
Work/business	0.09	0.36
Conversation at home or with friends/relatives	0.73	0.27
Cultural pursuits	---	0.09
Writing/correspondence	---	---
Generally	---	---
No response	0.09	0.09

Table 194 shows the circumstances in which subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Irish envisaged using the language. Here the "no response" figure is minimal, and it is worth noting the implied predominance of oral communication in the overall pattern of envisaged use.

Table 195 shows when subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Irish envisaged using the language. Again the "no response" rate is minimal, and overall the table implies a greater sense of urgency than Table 193.

TABLE 195 When did subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Irish envisage using the language?

	UG (11)	PG (11)
Now	0.36	0.18
In the future	0.36	0.18
Now and in the future	0.27	0.55
No response	---	0.09

Chapter 10

Interest in learning French

10.1 ATTITUDES TO FRENCH

10.1.1 Subjects who reported that they knew French (cf. Tables 157-160, 8.1.1)

As we saw in Chapter 3, 92.1% of UG subjects (221/240) and 90.3% of PG subjects (187/207) reported that they had learned French at some stage. Of the UG who had learned French 77.4% (171/221) said they would like to know the language better; of the PG who had learned French 62.0% (116/187) said they would like to know the language better. The significantly higher figure for UG may have arisen because UG are nearer to their school experience than PG and less likely to have developed specific second language needs.

10.1.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know French (cf. Tables 161 and 162, 8.1.2)

Of the UG subjects who had not learned French, 0.58 (11/19) said they would like to know the language; of the PG subjects who had not learned French, 0.95 (19/20) said they would like to know the language. Interestingly it is the PG rather than UG who here seem to demonstrate the status that French often has of an automatic first-choice foreign language.

10.2 SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBJECTS WHO REPORTED THAT THEY KNEW FRENCH BUT WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IT BETTER

10.2.1 Age at which learning had begun

Table 196 shows the ages at which subjects who knew French but said they would like to know it better began learning the language, compared with all subjects who had learned French. The divergences between the two categories are probably not significant, since they correspond quite closely to the divergences in the "no response" rate. Certainly there is no evidence to associate one age of beginning learning more closely than any other with a desire to know the language better.

TABLE 196 Ages at which all subjects who reported a knowledge of French began learning the language, compared with ages at which subjects who said they would like to know French better began learning French

	All UG who knew French (221)	UG who said they would like to know French better (171)	All PG who knew French (187)	PG who said they would like to know French better (116)
Before 4 years	---	0.6%	1.6%	0.0%
4-10 years	21.3%	20.5%	13.4%	16.4%
11-17 years	69.7%	73.7%	58.3%	62.1%
After 17 years	1.8%	2.3%	6.4%	7.8%
No response	7.2%	3.5%	20.3%	16.4%

10.2.2 Situations/circumstances in which French had been learned

24.0% of UG subjects (41/171) and 19.0% of PG subjects (22/116) reported that they had taken French at primary school; 94.2% of UG subjects (161/171) and 90.5% of PG subjects (105/116) reported that they had taken French at post-primary school. Table 197 shows the situations/circumstances in which

TABLE 197 Situations/circumstances in which French had been learned by (a) all subjects who knew French and (b) subjects who said they would like to know French better

	All UG who knew French (221)	UG who said they would like to know French better (171)	All PG who knew French (187)	PG who said they would like to know French better (116)
Home environment	3.6%	4.1%	2.7%	1.7%
School	88.2%	87.7%	72.7%	76.7%
Friends/native speakers	17.2%	21.1%	18.2%	16.4%
University or other course	1.8%	2.3%	25.1%	28.5%
Travel/living abroad	17.7%	17.0%	23.5%	25.0%
Books and literature/films/media/music	33.0%	32.8%	23.0%	25.0%
No response	6.3%	12.9%	17.7%	16.4%

subjects who knew French but said they would like to know it better reported that they had learned the language, compared with all learners of French. The divergences between the two categories are small, in most cases minimal. In this context a number of subjects clearly overlooked school as a situation in which they had learned French. 81.0% of UG subjects who had learned French in other ways than just at school (98/121) and 67.3% of PG subjects in the same category (66/98) said they would like to know the language better: in both cases a slightly higher figure than the proportion of all learners of French who said they would like to know the language better (77.4% and 62.0% respectively).

10.2.3 French as a medium of instruction (cf. Tables 27 and 28, 1.3.1; 3.3.1)

Of all subjects who knew French but said they would like to know it better, only one PG subject reported having experienced French as a medium of instruction at primary school. 24.6% of UG subjects (42/171) who said they would like to know French better reported having experienced French as a medium of instruction at post-primary school; the corresponding figure for all UG who had learned French is 23.3%. 10.3% (12/116) of PG subjects who said they would like to know French better reported having experienced French as a medium of instruction at post-primary level; the corresponding figure for all PG who had learned French is 17.5%.

10.2.4 Enjoyment (cf. Tables 40 and 41, 1.3.3)

Of the subjects who had taken French at primary school and said they would like to know the language better, 43.9% (18/41) UG and 36.4% (8/22) PG said French was the language they had most enjoyed learning at that level. These figures are slightly higher than those for all learners of French who took the language at primary school: UG 39.3%, PG 34.2% (cf. Table 40).

Of the subjects who had taken French at post-primary school and said they would like to know the language better, 37.3% (60/161) of UG and 29.5% (31/105) of PG said French was the language they had most enjoyed learning at that level. Again the UG figure is slightly higher than the corresponding figure for all UG who had taken French at post-primary level (35.2%). However, the PG figure is marginally lower than the corresponding figure for all PG who had taken French at post-primary level (30.7%; cf. Table 41).

10.2.5 Examination success in French

A majority of UG (74.3% - 127/171) and of PG (53.5% - 62/116) who said they knew French but would like to know it better, reported that they had gained Grade C or above in the

Leaving Certificate or an equivalent examination in French. The UG figure is somewhat higher and the PG figure somewhat lower than the corresponding figures for Irish (cf. 9.2.5), but the difference is probably not significant. However, here as in the case of Irish, the higher figure for UG than for PG seems to confirm that examination success has a greater influence on UG than on PG attitudes.

10.2.6 Visits to French-speaking territory

53.8% of the UG subjects (92/171) but only 29.3% of the PG subjects (34/116) who said they would like to know French better reported that they had visited French-speaking territory; the corresponding figures for all learners of French are: UG 54.8%, PG 64.2% (cf. 3.2.3). Of the UG who said they would like to know French better and had visited French-speaking territory, 37.0% (34/92) had stayed for between two weeks and one month and 31.5% (29/92) had stayed for between two and three months. Of the PG in this category 23.5% (8/34) had stayed for between two weeks and one month and 35.3% (12/34) had stayed for between two and three months. Table 198 shows the communicative experience in French-speaking territory reported by these subjects, compared with the communicative experience in French-speaking territory reported by all subjects who knew French and had visited such territory.

TABLE 198 Communicative experience in French-speaking territory reported by (a) all subjects who knew French and had visited French-speaking territory and (b) subjects who said they would like to know French better and had visited French-speaking territory

	All UG who knew French (121)	UG who said they would like to know French better (92)	All PG who knew French (120)	PG who said they would like to know French better (34)
Spoke French	45.5%	44.6%	47.5%	41.2%
Were spoken to in French	57.9%	58.7%	51.7%	47.1%
French spoken in their company	83.5%	85.9%	74.2%	61.8%
Spoke French and own language	38.0%	63.0%	33.3%	55.9%
Were spoken to in French and own language	30.6%	40.2%	36.7%	47.1%
French and own language spoken in their company	13.2%	13.0%	14.2%	35.3%

10.2.7 Subjects' assessment of their command of language skills in French (cf. 3.4.1)

Subjects who knew French but said they would like to know it better claimed to be able to understand spoken French, read, speak and write French in the percentages set out in Table 199. UG subjects who said they would like to know French better were marginally more confident than all UG learners of French with regard to understanding spoken French and reading and marginally less confident with regard to speaking. PG subjects who said they would like to know French better were on average some 5% more confident than all PG learners of French in assessing their command of the language skills in French.

TABLE 199 Skills in French claimed by (a) all subjects who knew French and (b) subjects who said they would like to know French better

	All UG who knew French (221)	UG who said they would like to know French better (171)	All PG who knew French (187)	PG who said they would like to know French better (116)
Understand speech	90.0%	90.1%	72.2%	76.7%
Speak	80.5%	80.1%	65.2%	70.7%
Read	95.0%	96.5%	74.9%	81.9%
Write	86.0%	86.0%	54.6%	59.5%

10.3 REASONS FOR WANTING TO KNOW FRENCH BETTER/KNOW FRENCH

10.3.1 Subjects who reported that they knew French but would like to know it better (cf. Tables 164 and 165, 8.2.2)

As Table 200 shows, among subjects who knew French the reason most often given for wanting to know the language better was the desire to be able to converse in French for purposes of travel. This was mentioned by 42.1% of UG and accounted for 26.4% of all UG responses under this head; and it was mentioned by 44.8% of PG and accounted for 25.4% of all PG responses under this head. 11.7% of UG and 9.5% of PG expressed an interest in conversation for work purposes. 19.9% of UG but only 8.6% of PG said they would like to know the language better because of its international importance. 13.8% of PG but only 7.6% of UG said they would like to know the language better in order to get to know French literature better. 11.2% of PG but only 2.3% of UG said they would like to know French better for general purposes of self-improvement. However, 10.3% of PG and 7.6% of UG reported that they would like to know French better because they had some knowledge of the language already. 12.9% of PG also reported that they would like to know French better for career purposes; these may have been mostly prospective teachers.

TABLE 200 Percentages of subjects who knew French but said they would like to know it better reporting different reasons for wanting to improve their knowledge of the language

		UG (171)	PG (116)
1.0	Conversation generally	24.6%	9.5%
1.1	Travel abroad/holidays	42.1%	44.8%
1.2	Conferences/academic situations	0.6%	2.6%
1.3	Work/business	11.7%	9.5%
1.4	Social purposes	1.2%	1.7%
2.0	Practical value generally	4.1%	0.9%
2.1	Listen to radio/news media	---	3.5%
2.2	Career purposes	1.2%	12.9%
2.3	General study purposes	1.8%	5.2%
3.0	Reading generally	4.1%	5.2%
3.1	Technical/academic	2.3%	6.9%
3.2	Literature	7.6%	13.8%
4.0	General interest	1.2%	5.2%
4.1	Self-improvement	2.3%	11.2%
4.2	Pleasure	2.9%	2.6%
4.3	For the sake of knowledge	1.8%	0.9%
4.4	Challenge of learning	---	0.9%
5.0	Importance of the language generally	---	---
5.1	Within EEC/internationally	19.9%	8.6%
5.2	To gain access to other peoples/cultures	---	0.9%
5.3	To understand other peoples/cultures	4.1%	3.5%
5.4	As part of one's cultural heritage	---	0.9%
6.0	Special interests generally	---	0.9%
6.1	Liking for the language	9.9%	3.5%
6.2	Liking for the sounds of the language	1.8%	1.7%
6.3	Have friends in country or who speak the language	3.5%	2.6%
6.4	Personal reasons	1.2%	0.9%
6.5	Cultural reasons	2.3%	4.3%
6.6	The language is easy to learn	---	1.7%
6.7	Already have some knowledge of the language	7.6%	10.3%

10.3.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know but would like to know French (cf. Tables 166 and 167, 8.2.3)

As Table 201 shows, among subjects who did not know but said they would like to know French, the most commonly stated reason was a desire to be able to converse in the language for general travel/holiday purposes. This was mentioned by 0.55 of UG and accounted for 0.43 of UG responses under this head

TABLE 201 Proportions of subjects who did not know but said they would like to know French reporting different reasons for wanting to know the language

		UG (11)	PG (19)
1.0	Conversation generally	0.09	---
1.1	Travel abroad/holidays	0.55	0.53
1.2	Conferences/academic situations	---	---
1.3	Work/business	---	0.05
1.4	Social purposes	---	0.05
2.0	Practical value generally	---	---
2.1	Listen to radio/news media	---	---
2.2	Career purposes	---	---
2.3	General study purposes	---	0.16
3.0	Reading generally	---	---
3.1	Technical/academic	0.09	---
3.2	Literature	0.18	0.05
4.0	General interest	---	---
4.1	Self-improvement	---	0.16
4.2	Pleasure	---	---
4.3	For the sake of knowledge	0.09	---
4.4	Challenge of learning	[illegible]	---
5.0	Importance of the language generally	---	---
5.1	Within EEC/internationally	0.18	0.21
5.2	To gain access to other peoples/cultures	---	---
5.3	To understand other peoples/cultures	0.09	0.11
5.4	As part of one's cultural heritage	---	---
6.0	Special interests generally	---	---
6.1	Liking for the language	---	---
6.2	Liking for the sounds of the language	---	---
6.3	Have friends in country or who speak the language	---	---
6.4	Personal reasons	---	0.05
6.5	Cultural reasons	---	0.05
6.6	The language is easy to learn	---	---
6.7	Already have some knowledge of the language	---	---

and it was mentioned by 0.53 of PG and accounted for 0.37 of PG responses under this head.

10.4 CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH SUBJECTS ENVISAGED USING FRENCH (cf. Tables 168 and 169, 8.3)

10.4.1 Subjects who reported that they knew French but would like to know it better

Predictably the circumstances in which subjects who knew French but said they would like to know it better envisaged using French are closely allied to their reasons for wanting to know French better, as a comparison of Table 202 with Table 200 shows. Table 203 shows when these subjects envisaged using French. The high "no response" rate in these Tables should be noted. Although not as high as in the corresponding tables for Irish (Tables 192 and 193, 9.4.1), they are more than high enough to cast some doubt on the degree of practicality attaching to subjects' desire to know French better.

TABLE 202 Circumstances in which subjects who said they would like to know French better envisaged using French

	UG (171)	PG (116)
As tourist/with tourists	57.3%	47.4%
Reading/literature	26.3%	23.3%
Academic work/research	2.3%	12.1%
Work/business	32.2%	34.5%
Conversation at home or with friends/relatives	20.5%	19.8%
Cultural pursuits	1.8%	4.3%
Write/correspondence	0.6%	2.6%
No response	33.3%	41.4%

TABLE 203 When did subjects who said they would like to know French better envisage using the language?

	UG (171)	PG (116)
Now	1.2%	4.3%
In the future	24.6%	8.6%
Both	31.6%	36.2%
No response	42.7%	50.9%

10.4.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know but would like to know French

The circumstances in which subjects who did not know but said they would like to know French envisaged using French are closely related to their reasons for wanting to know French, as a comparison of Table 204 with Table 201 shows. Table 205 shows when these subjects envisaged using French. Compared with Tables 202 and 203, the "no response" rate in Tables 204 and 205 is negligible. However, the size of the subgroups described in the latter tables makes it impossible to draw any firm conclusions from this divergence.

TABLE 204 Circumstances in which subjects who did not know but said they would like to know French envisaged using French

	UG (11)	PG (19)
As tourist/with tourists	0.82	0.95
Reading/literature	0.27	0.56
Academic work/research	0.09	---
Work/business	0.18	0.32
Conversation at home or with friends/relatives	0.18	0.26
No response	0.09	0.05

TABLE 205 When did subjects who did not know but said they would like to know French envisage using the language?

	UG (11)	PG (19)
Now	0.18	0.16
In the future	0.46	0.53
Both	0.27	0.26
No response	0.09	0.05

Chapter 11

Interest in learning German

11.1 ATTITUDES TO GERMAN

11.1.1 Subjects who reported that they knew German (cf. Tables 157-160, 8.1.1)

As we saw in Chapter 4, 35.8% of UG subjects (86/240) and 35.8% of PG subjects (74/207) reported that they had learned German at some stage. Of subjects who knew German 76.7% of UG (66/86) and 66.2% of PG (49/74) said they would like to know German better. These figures are broadly comparable to the percentages of subjects who knew French and said they would like to know it better: UG 78.5%, PG 62.0% (cp. 10.1.1 above).

11.1.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know German (cf. Tables 161 and 162, 8.1.2)

Of the subjects who did not know German 57.8% of UG ([illegible]/154) and 55.6% of PG (74/133) said that they would like to know the language.

11.2 SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBJECTS WHO REPORTED THAT THEY KNEW GERMAN BUT WOULD WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IT BETTER

11.2.1 Age at which learning had begun

TABLE 206 Ages at which (a) all subjects who knew German and (b) subjects who said they would like to know German better had begun learning the language

	All UG who knew German (86)	UG who said they would like to know German better (66)	All PG who knew German (74)	PG who said they would like to know German better (49)
Before 4 years	4.7%	1.5%	2.7%	---
5-10 years	2.3%	---	---	2.0%
11-17 years	44.2%	45.5%	35.1%	28.6%
After 17 years	24.4%	26.8%	32.4%	34.7%
No response	24.4%	25.8%	29.7%	38.8%

Table 206 shows the ages at which subjects who said they would like to know German better had begun to learn the language, compared with all learners of German. The same broad pattern emerges for both categories of subjects. However, it is worth noting that among subjects who said they would like to know German better a higher percentage had begun learning the language after the age of 17. This may imply that a high degree of importance attaches to German as a language with vocational relevance.

11.2.2 Situations/circumstances in which German had been learned

Table 207 shows the situations/circumstances in which subjects who said they would like to know German better reported having learned the language, compared with all learners of German. As with Irish and French, so here a number of subjects clearly failed to mention school under this head. No clear trend emerges from Table 207.

TABLE 207 Situations/circumstances in which German was learned (a) by all subjects who knew German and (b) by subjects who said they would like to know German better

	All UG who knew German (86)	UG who said they would like to know German better (66)	All PG who knew German (74)	PG who said they would like to know German better (49)
Home environment	4.7%	1.5%	4.1%	---
School	45.4%	48.5%	40.5%	38.7%
Informal contact with native speakers	15.1%	18.2%	18.9%	16.3%
University or other course	10.5%	10.6%	36.5%	38.8%
Visits to German-speaking territory	20.9%	22.7%	21.6%	20.4%
German books and literature/ films/media/ music	23.3%	27.3%	18.9%	22.5%
No response	20.9%	21.2%	28.4%	30.6%

11.2.3 German as a medium of instruction (cf. Tables 27 and 28, 1.3.1; 4.3.1)

Of all subjects who knew German but said they would like to know it better, one UG had taken German at primary school; the same respondent had experienced German as a medium of instruction at primary school. Among subjects who said they would like to know German better and who had taken German at post-primary school, 0.09 of UG (3/35) and 0.10 of PG (2/21) had experienced German as a medium of instruction at that level. These figures are markedly lower than those for all learners of German who had taken German at post-primary school and had experienced German as a medium of instruction at that level (UG 0.17 - 9/52; PG 0.16 - 5/32).

11.2.4 Enjoyment (cf. Tables 40 and 41, 1.3.3)

Of the UG subjects who had taken German at post-primary school and said they would like to know the language better, 0.26 (9/35) said that German was the language they had most enjoyed learning at that level; this is marginally higher than the corresponding figure for all UG who had taken German at post-primary level (0.23 - 12/52). Of the PG subjects who had taken German at post-primary school and said they would like to know the language better, 0.19 (4/21) said German was the language they had enjoyed learning most at that level; this is marginally lower than the corresponding figure for all PG who had taken German at post-primary level (0.22 - 7/32).

11.2.5 Examination success in German

0.60 (21/35) of UG and 0.48 (10/21) of PG who said they would like to know German better reported that they had achieved Grade C or better in the Leaving Certificate or an equivalent examination in German. These figures are lower than the corresponding figures for Irish and French (cf. 9.2.5, 10.2.5), but once again there is evidence that among the factors causing subjects to want to know German better examination success was likely to be more important for UG than for PG.

11.2.6 Visits to German-speaking territory

0.64 (42/66) of the UG subjects and 0.55 (27/49) of the PG subjects who said they would like to know German better reported that they had visited German-speaking territory. The corresponding figures for all learners of German are: UG 54.7%, PG 64.9% (cp. 4.2.3). Of the UG who said they would like to know German better and had visited German-speaking territory, 0.02 (1/42) had stayed for one week or less, 0.21 (9/42) had stayed for between two and four weeks, 0.55 (23/42) had stayed for between two and three months, and 0.17 (7/42) had stayed for between four and six months. Of the PG in this category, 0.22 (6/27) had stayed for one week or less, 0.33 (9/27) had stayed for between two and four weeks, 0.22 (6/27) had stayed for between two and three months, and 0.19 (5/27) had stayed for between four and six months. Table 208 shows the communicative experience in German-speaking territory reported by these subjects compared with the communicative experience in German-speaking territory reported by all subjects who knew German and had visited German-speaking territory.

TABLE 208 Communicative experience in German-speaking territory reported by (a) all subjects who knew German and had visited such territory and (b) subjects who said said they would like to know German better and had visited such territory

	All UG who knew German (47)	UG who said they would like to know German better (42)	All PG who knew German (48)	PG who said they would like to know German better (27)
Spoke German	0.34	0.17	0.38	0.04
Were spoken to in German	0.38	0.36	0.44	0.33
German spoken by others in their company	0.79	0.71	0.65	0.70
Spoke German and own language	0.47	0.55	0.27	0.52
Were spoken to in German and own language	0.47	0.55	0.29	0.52
German and own language spoken in their company	0.17	0.24	0.13	0.30

11.2.7 Subjects' assessment of their command of language skills in German (cf. 3.4.1)

As Table 209 shows, UG subjects were generally more confident than PG in claiming command of the four language skills in German, the one notable exception to this being the reading skill among all PG who had learned German. Among UG subjects who said they would like to know German better, command of the receptive skills was claimed in almost the same proportion as among all UG who had learned German. However, UG who said they would like to know German better claimed command of the productive skills somewhat less frequently than the totality of UG who had learned German. Among PG, subjects who said they would like to know German better consistently claimed command of the four language skills less frequently than the totality of subjects who had learned German. It is of course possible that subjects who said they would like to know German better measured their command of the skills against more precisely defined objectives than the totality of subjects who had learned German. If so, this could produce a more pessimistic view of their competence in German.

TABLE 209 Command of language skills in German claimed by (a) all subjects who knew German and (b) subjects who said they would like to know German better

	UG who had learned German (86)	UG who would like to know German better (66)	PG who had learned German (74)	PG who would like to know German better (49)
Understand speech	70.9%	71.2%	54.1%	53.1%
Speak	64.0%	60.6%	47.3%	40.8%
Read	65.1%	66.7%	66.2%	61.2%
Write	48.8%	43.9%	32.4%	26.5%

11.3 REASONS FOR WANTING TO KNOW GERMAN BETTER/KNOW GERMAN

11.3.1 Subjects who reported that they knew German but would like to know it better (cf. Tables 164 and 165, 8.2.2)

Table 210 shows the percentages of subjects reporting that they knew German but would like to know it better giving different reasons for wanting a better knowledge of the language. PG gave greater prominence than UG to conversation in general and for purposes of travel abroad/holidays, whereas UG gave greater prominence to conversation for purposes of work/business. PG attached greater practical value to German than UG, especially as regards study; and PG likewise attached much greater importance than UG to reading German, especially German literature. By contrast UG laid greater stress than PG on the importance of German within the EEC/internationally and to an established liking for the language.

TABLE 210 Percentages of subjects who knew German but said they would like to know it better giving different reasons for wanting to improve their knowledge of the language

		UG (66)	PG (49)
1.0	Conversation generally	---	10.2%
1.1	Travel abroad/holidays	39.4%	42.9%
1.2	Conferences/academic situations	1.5%	2.0%
1.3	Work/business	19.7%	8.2%
1.4	Social purposes	6.1%	---
2.0	Practical value generally	---	2.0%
2.1	Listen to radio/news media	4.6%	6.1%
2.2	Career purposes	1.5%	6.1%
2.3	General study purposes	1.5%	20.4%
3.0	Reading generally	1.5%	6.1%
3.1	Technical/academic	6.1%	14.3%
3.2	Literature	3.0%	22.5%
4.0	General interest	1.5%	4.1%
4.1	Self-improvement	3.0%	6.1%
4.2	Pleasure	3.0%	2.0%
4.3	For the sake of knowledge	4.6%	2.0%
4.4	Challenge of learning	1.5%	4.1%
5.0	Importance of the language generally	---	---
5.1	Within EEC/internationally	18.2%	6.1%
5.2	To gain access to other peoples/cultures	---	---
5.3	To understand other peoples/cultures	3.0%	6.1%
5.4	As part of one's cultural heritage	---	2.0%
6.0	Special interests generally	---	---
6.1	Liking for the language	13.6%	2.0%
6.2	Liking for the sounds of the language	1.5%	---
6.3	Have friends in country or who speak the language	7.6%	---
6.4	Personal reasons	1.5%	2.0%
6.5	Cultural reasons	---	6.1%
6.6	The language is easy to learn	1.5%	4.1%
6.7	Already have some knowledge of the language	6.1%	10.2%

11.3.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know but would like to know German (cf. Tables 166 and 167, 8.2.3)

TABLE 211 Percentages of subjects who did not know but said they would like to know German reporting different reasons for wanting to know the language

		UG (89)	PG (74)
1.0	Conversation generally	19.1%	1.4%
1.1	Travel abroad/holidays	31.5%	39.2%
1.2	Conferences/academic situations	1.1%	---
1.3	Work/business	22.5%	8.1%
1.4	Social purposes	---	1.4%
2.0	Practical value generally	1.1%	---
2.1	Listen to radio/news media	---	1.4%
2.2	Career purposes	1.1%	9.5%
2.3	General study purposes	1.1%	9.5%
3.0	Reading generally	7.9%	1.4%
3.1	Technical/academic	3.4%	10.8%
3.2	Literature	4.5%	4.1%
4.0	General interest	1.1%	8.1%
4.1	Self-improvement	1.1%	5.4%
4.2	Pleasure	1.1%	---
4.3	For the sake of knowledge	1.1%	2.7%
4.4	Challenge of learning	---	1.4%
5.0	Importance of the language generally	---	---
5.1	Within EEC/internationally	22.5%	10.8%
5.2	To gain access to other peoples/cultures	---	---
5.3	To understand other peoples/cultures	6.7%	12.2%
5.4	As part of one's cultural heritage	---	---
6.0	Special interests generally	---	---
6.1	Liking for the language	4.5%	1.4%
6.2	Liking for the sounds of the language	1.1%	1.4%
6.3	Have friends in country or who speak the language	6.7%	1.4%
6.4	Personal reasons	---	5.4%
6.5	Cultural reasons	1.1%	4.1%
6.6	The language is easy to learn	1.1%	---
6.7	Already have some knowledge of the language	---	---

Table 211 shows the percentages of subjects who did not know but said they would like to know German giving different reasons for wanting to know the language. Both UG and PG gave greatest prominence to conversation for purposes of travel abroad/holidays, but UG attached much greater importance than PG to conversation in general and conversation for purposes of work/business. PG gave greater prominence than UG to the practical value of German for career and general study purposes. Both groups attached relatively little importance to reading German literature, but PG were more interested than UG in reading German for technical/academic purposes. Again UG gave greater prominence than PG to the importance of German within the EEC/internationally, whereas PG gave greater prominence to cross-cultural understanding.

11.4 CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH SUBJECTS ENVISAGED USING GERMAN (cf. Tables 168 and 169, 8.3)

11.4.1 Subjects who reported that they knew German but would like to know it better

As comparison between Tables 212 and 210 shows, the circumstances in which subjects who knew German but said they would like to know it better envisaged using German are quite closely related to the reasons they gave for wanting to know German better, travel abroad and work/business being the most prominent among both categories of respondent. In this the pattern of response for German is the same as for French. Scarcely any respondents envisaged using German for purposes of correspondence, though presumably some of them would expect the use of the language for purposes of work/business to involve the writing skill. Table 213 shows when these subjects envisaged using German. As with the corresponding tables for Irish and French, so here the high "no response" rate should be noted.

TABLE 212 Circumstances in which subjects who said they would like to know German better envisaged using German

	UG (66)	PG (49)
As tourist/with tourists	43.9%	49.0%
Reading/literature	19.7%	14.3%
Academic work/research	1.5%	8.2%
Work/business	30.3%	34.7%
Conversation at home or with friends/relatives	13.6%	14.3%
Cultural pursuits	0.0%	6.1%
Write/correspond	1.5%	2.0%
Generally	1.5%	0.0%
No response	47.0%	42.9%

TABLE 213 When did subjects who knew German but said they would like to know it better envisage using the language?

	UG (66)	PG (49)
Now	1.5%	10.2%
In the future	24.2%	14.3%
Both now and in the future	28.8%	26.5%
No response	45.5%	49.0%

11.4.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know but would like to know German

The circumstances in which subjects who did not know but said they would like to know German envisaged using the language correspond broadly with the reasons they gave for wanting to know the language, as comparison of Table 214 with Table 211 shows. A comparison of Tables 212 and 214 shows that in their rate of response subjects who did not know German expressed a consistently higher level of interest in using German in the four most popular circumstances: as a tourist; to read; for purposes of work/business; in conversation at home or with friends/relatives. An encouragingly high proportion of PG subjects who did not know German envisaged using the language in academic work/research. This figure should be set beside the much smaller percentage of the same group (10.8% - see Table 211) who instanced reading for academic/technical purposes among their reasons for wanting to know German. Table 215 shows when subjects who did not know but said they would like to know German envisaged using the language.

TABLE 214 Circumstances in which subjects who did not know but said they would like to know German envisaged using German

	UG (89)	PG (74)
As tourist/with tourists	70.8%	73.0%
Reading/literature	33.2%	32.4%
Academic work/research	3.4%	23.0%
Work/business	49.4%	36.5%
Conversation at home or with friends/relatives	25.8.%	20.3%
Cultural pursuits	1.1%	5.4%
Write/correspond	0.0%	1.4%
Generally	2.3%	0.0%
No response	1.1%	2.7%

The "no response" rates in Tables 214 and 215 are negligible compared with those in Tables 212 and 213. The same comparative feature occurred in the corresponding tables for Irish and French. But whereas the numbers of subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Irish and French were too low to allow any firm conclusions to be drawn, in the case of German there were more subjects who did not know but said they would like to know the language than subjects who knew the language but said they would like to know it better. The difference between the "no response" rates in Tables 212 and 213 on the one hand and Tables 214 and 215 on the other seems to imply that subjects who did not know but said they would like to know German had a more thoroughly motivated interest in the language than subjects who knew German but said they would like to know it better.

TABLE 215 When did subjects who did not know but would like to know German envisage using the language?

	UG (89)	PG (74)
Now	2.3%	5.4%
In the future	64.1%	52.7%
Both now and in the future	30.3%	35.1%
No response	3.4%	6.8%

211

Chapter 12

Interest in learning Spanish

12.1 ATTITUDES TO SPANISH

12.1.1 Subjects who reported that they knew Spanish (cf. Tables 157-160, 8.1.1)

As we saw in Chapter 5, 15.4% of UG subjects (37/240) and 19.8% of PG subjects (41/207) reported that they had learned Spanish at some stage. Of these subjects 17 UG (0.46) and 21 PG (0.51) said that they would like to know Spanish better. These proportions are significantly lower than the corresponding percentages for French and German (see 10.1.1 and 11.1.1).

12.1.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know Spanish (cf. Tables 161 and 162, 8.1.2)

Of the subjects who did not know Spanish 21.2% of UG (43/203) and 18.7% of PG (31/166) said that they would like to know the language. These figures compare very unfavourably with those for German (cp. 11.1.2) and suggest that a sense of the importance of Spanish as a world language may not be part of our subjects' general cultural awareness.

12.2 SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBJECTS WHO REPORTED THAT THEY KNEW SPANISH BUT WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IT BETTER

12.2.1 Age at which learning had begun

TABLE 216 Ages at which (a) all learners of Spanish and (b) subjects who said they would like to know Spanish better had begun learning the language

	All UG who knew Spanish (37)	UG who said they would like to know Spanish better (17)	All PG who knew Spanish (41)	PG who said they would like to know Spanish better (21)
Before 4 years	---	---	0.02	---
4-10 years	0.05	0.12	---	---
11-17 years	0.43	0.47	0.37	0.24
After 17 years	0.03	---	0.22	0.19
No response	0.49	0.41	0.39	0.57

Table 216 shows the ages at which subjects who knew Spanish but said they would like to know it better had begun learning the language, compared with the ages at which all learners of Spanish had begun learning the language. The high "no response" rate makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions, though the overall patterns for both categories of UG seem very similar, as do the overall patterns for both categories of PG. Table 216 provides a reminder that PG had quite frequently begun learning Spanish after leaving school.

12.2.2 Situations/circumstances in which Spanish had been learned

Table 217 shows the situations/circumstances in which subjects who knew Spanish but said they would like to know it better had learned the language, compared with the situations/circumstances in which all subjects who knew Spanish had learned the language. Travel/living abroad was markedly more important for UG who said they would like to know Spanish better than for all subjects who knew Spanish. As far as PG are concerned, the high "no response" rate for PG who said they would like to know Spanish better makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions.

TABLE 217 Situations/circumstances in which Spanish had been learned (a) by all subjects who knew Spanish and (b) by subjects who knew Spanish but said they would like to know it better

	UG who knew Spanish (37)	UG who said they would like to know Spanish better [illegible]	PG who knew Spanish (41)	PG who said they would like to know Spanish better (21)
Home environment	---	---	0.05	---
School	0.49	0.59	0.37	0.19
Friends/native speakers	0.16	0.18	0.24	0.19
University or other course	[illegible]	---	0.24	0.28
Travel/living abroad	0.14	0.29	0.22	0.14
Books and literature/films/media/music	0.16	0.12	0.29	0.28
No response	0.38	---	0.34	0.57

12.2.3 Spanish as a medium of instruction (cf. Tables 27 and 28, 1.3.1; 5.3.1)

The one UG subject who reported that he/she had experienced Spanish as a medium of instruction at primary school also said that he/she would like to know Spanish better. Of subjects who had taken Spanish at post-primary school and said they would like to know the language better, 0.21 UG (3/14) and 0.13 PG (1/8) reported that they had experienced Spanish as a medium of instruction at that level. The corresponding proportions for all subjects who had taken Spanish at post-primary school are: UG 0.11, PG 0.23 (cf. 5.3.1).

12.2.4 Enjoyment (cf. Tables 40 and 41, 1.3.3)

The one UG subject who said Spanish was the language he/she had most enjoyed learning at primary school also said that he/she would like to know Spanish better. Of subjects who had taken Spanish at post-primary level and said they would like to know the language better, 0.57 UG (8/14) and 0.63 PG (5/8) reported that Spanish was the language they had most enjoyed learning at that level. The corresponding proportions for all subjects who had taken Spanish at post-primary level are: UG 0.29, PG 0.39. There thus appears to be a positive correlation between enjoyment of learning Spanish at post-primary level and a desire to know the language better.

12.2.5 Examination success in Spanish

Of UG who had taken Spanish at post-primary school and said they would like to know the language better, 0.64 (9/14) reported that they had achieved at least Grade C in the Leaving Certificate or an equivalent examination in Spanish; the corresponding proportion for all UG subjects who had taken Spanish at post-primary school was somewhat lower: 0.57 (16/28). Of PG who had taken Spanish at post-primary school and said they would like to know the language better, 0.50 (4/8) reported that they had achieved at least Grade C in the Leaving Certificate or an equivalent examination in Spanish; the corresponding proportion for all PG subjects who had taken Spanish at post-primary school was identical: 0.50 (13/26).

12.2.6 Visits to Spanish-speaking territory

0.47 UG (8/17) and 0.52 PG (11/21) who said they would like to know Spanish better reported that they had visited Spanish-speaking territory. The corresponding figures for all subjects who had learned Spanish are markedly higher: UG 0.54, PG 0.66. Of the UG who wanted to know Spanish better and had visited Spanish-speaking territory, 0.63 had stayed up to one month, 0.13 had stayed between one and three months, and 0.25 had stayed between four and six months. Of the PG in this category, 0.36

had stayed up to one month, 0.27 had stayed between one and three months, 0.18 had stayed between four and six months, and 0.18 had stayed between ten and twelve months.

Table 218 shows the communicative experience in Spanish-speaking territory reported by subjects who had visited such territory and said they would like to know the language better, compared with the communicative experience in Spanish-speaking territory reported by all subjects who knew Spanish and reported having visited such territory. UG subjects who said they would like to know Spanish better reported a somewhat higher level of contact with Spanish and less dependence on their own language than all UG subjects who knew Spanish and had visited Spanish-speaking territory. On balance PG who said they would like to know Spanish better reported a slightly higher level of contact with Spanish, and slightly less dependence on their own language than all PG subjects who knew Spanish and had visited Spanish-speaking territory.

TABLE 218 Communicative experience in Spanish-speaking territory reported by (a) all subjects who knew Spanish and had visited such territory and (b) subjects who said they would like to know Spanish better and had visited such territory

	All UG who knew Spanish (21)	UG who said they would like to know Spanish better (8)	All PG who knew Spanish (26)	PG who said they would like to know Spanish better (11)
Spoke Spanish	0.43	0.50	0.42	0.46
Spanish spoken to them	0.57	0.63	0.42	0.36
Spanish spoken in their company	0.86	0.88	0.65	0.73
Spoke Spanish and own language	0.29	0.25	0.31	0.27
Spanish and own language spoken to them	0.24	0.13	0.42	0.46
Spanish and own language spoken in their company	0.14	0.13	0.23	0.18

12.2.7 Subjects' assessment of their command of language skills in Spanish (cf. 3.4.1)

As Table 219 shows, UG who said they would like to know Spanish better were marginally more confident than all learners of Spanish as regards claiming competence in the receptive skills of understanding speech and reading, but marginally less confident as regards the productive skills of speaking and writing. PG who said they would like to know Spanish better were slightly more confident than all PG learners of Spanish in claiming competence in understanding spoken Spanish; otherwise they were markedly less confident.

TABLE 219 Command of language skills in Spanish claimed by (a) all subjects who knew Spanish and (b) subjects who said they would like to know Spanish better

	All UG who knew Spanish (37)	UG who said they would like to know Spanish better (17)	All PG who knew Spanish (41)	PG who said they would like to know Spanish better (21)
Understand speech	0.70	0.71	0.68	0.71
Speak	0.54	0.53	0.56	0.43
Read	0.62	0.65	0.78	0.52
Write	0.54	0.53	0.49	0.43

12.3 REASONS FOR WANTING TO KNOW SPANISH BETTER/KNOW SPANISH

12.3.1 Subjects who reported that they knew Spanish but would like to know it better (cf. Tables 164 and 165; 8.2.2)

Table 220 shows the proportions of subjects who knew Spanish but said they would like to know it better giving different reasons for wanting an improved knowledge of the language. Among UG the dominant reason was travel abroad/holidays; work/business, the practical value of the language, and a desire to build on existing knowledge of the language were the only other reasons to be specified by more than a single subject. Among PG travel abroad/holidays was again the most frequently specified reason, though it was quite closely followed by the belief that Spanish is easy to learn. For the rest PG collectively specified twice as many reasons as UG. This seems to reflect a less stereotyped view of the language than is evident among UG and may be connected with the fact that a greater proportion of PG than of UG began learning Spanish after the age of 17.

TABLE 220 Proportions of subjects who knew Spanish but said they would like to know it better reporting different reasons for wanting to improve their knowledge of the language

		UG (17)	PG (21)
1.0	Conversation generally	0.06	0.14
1.1	Travel abroad/holidays	0.53	0.29
1.2	Conferences/academic situations	---	---
1.3	Work/business	0.24	---
1.4	Social purposes	0.06	---
2.0	Practical value generally	0.12	---
2.1	Listen to radio/news media	---	---
2.2	Career purposes	---	0.14
2.3	General study purposes	---	---
3.0	Reading generally	---	0.05
3.1	Technical/academic	---	0.05
3.2	Literature	---	0.14
4.0	General interest	---	---
4.1	Self-improvement	---	0.10
4.2	Pleasure	---	---
4.3	For the sake of knowledge	---	0.05
4.4	Challenge of learning	---	---
5.0	Importance of the language generally	---	---
5.1	Within EEC/internationally	---	0.05
5.2	To gain access to other peoples/cultures	---	---
5.3	To understand other peoples/cultures	0.06	0.10
5.4	As part of one's cultural heritage	---	---
6.0	Special interests generally	---	---
6.1	Liking for the language	0.06	0.14
6.2	Liking for the sounds of the language	---	0.05
6.3	Have friends in country or who speak the language	0.06	0.05
6.4	Personal reasons	---	0.05
6.5	Cultural reasons	---	0.10
6.6	The language is easy to learn	---	0.24
6.7	Already have some knowledge of the language	0.12	0.14

12.3.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know but would like to know Spanish (cf. Tables 166 and 167, 8.2.3)

Table 221 shows the proportions of subjects who said they did not know but would like to know Spanish giving different reasons for wanting to know the language. Compared with Table 220, Table 221 shows a much wider spread of reasons in the UG column but a slightly narrower spread in the PG column. Among UG

TABLE 221 Proportions of subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Spanish reporting different reasons for wanting to know the language

		UG (43)	PG (31)
1.0	Conversation generally	0.23	0.03
1.1	Travel abroad/holidays	0.28	0.52
1.2	Conferences/academic situations	----	----
1.3	Work/business	0.02	----
1.4	Social purposes	----	----
2.0	Practical value generally	0.07	----
2.1	Listen to radio/news media	----	0.03
2.2	Career purposes	0.02	0.03
2.3	General study purposes	----	----
3.0	Reading generally	0.05	0.03
3.1	Technical/academic	0.02	----
3.2	Literature	0.07	0.07
4.0	General interest	0.02	0.03
4.1	Self-improvement	----	0.07
4.2	Pleasure	0.05	0.03
4.3	For the sake of knowledge	0.05	----
4.4	Challenge of learning	0.02	0.03
5.0	Importance of the language generally	----	----
5.1	Within EEC/internationally	0.16	0.13
5.2	To gain access to other peoples/cultures	0.02	----
5.3	To understand other peoples/cultures	0.05	0.23
5.4	As part of one's cultural heritage	----	----
6.0	Special interests generally	----	0.03
6.1	Liking for the language	0.02	----
6.2	Liking for the sounds of the language	0.05	----
6.3	Have friends in country or who speak the language	0.14	0.10
6.4	Personal reasons	----	----
6.5	Cultural reasons	0.02	0.03
6.6	The language is easy to learn	0.02	----
6.7	Already have some knowledge of the language	0.02	----

general conversation and travel abroad/holidays is by far the most dominant reason. It is worth making three further points of comparison with Table 220. First, subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Spanish appear to be much more aware of the international importance of the language than subjects who knew Spanish but said they would like to know it better. Secondly, PG who did not know but said they would like to know Spanish attached much greater importance to cross-cultural understanding than UG in the same category, while this reason was given by a single PG among subjects who said they knew Spanish but would like to know it better. Thirdly, the desire to communicate with Spanish-speaking friends was mentioned by only one UG and one PG among subjects who knew Spanish but said they would like to know it better, whereas this was proportionally the fourth most frequently specified reason among both UG and PG who said they did not know but would like to know Spanish.

12.4 CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH SUBJECTS ENVISAGED USING SPANISH (cf. Tables 168 and 169, 8.3)

12.4.1 Subjects who reported that they knew Spanish but would like to know it better

Table 222 shows the circumstances in which subjects who knew Spanish but said they would like to know it better envisaged using the language. The predominance of the first category in the table corresponds to the prominence that subjects gave to travel abroad/holidays among their reasons for wanting to know the language better. Among UG work/business appears to be as prominent for Spanish was it was in general for German (cp.11.4). Table 223 shows when these subjects envisaged using Spanish: more in the future than in the present.

TABLE 222 Circumstances in which subjects who already knew Spanish envisaged using the language

	UG (17)	PG (21)
As tourist/with tourists	0.59	0.48
Reading/literature	0.29	0.24
Academic work/research	---	0.05
Work/business	0.35	0.10
Conversation at home or with relatives/friends	0.24	0.19
Cultural pursuits	---	0.05
No response	0.18	0.38

TABLE 223 When did subjects who knew Spanish but said they would like to know it better envisage using the language?

	UG (17)	PG (21)
Now	---	0.05
In the future	0.41	0.29
Now and in the future	0.35	0.19
No response	0.24	0.48

12.4.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know but would like to know Spanish

Table 224 shows the circumstances in which subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Spanish envisaged using the language. Again the predominance of the first category corresponds to the prominence that subjects gave to conversation generally and travel abroad/holidays among their reasons for wanting to know Spanish. The relatively high proportion of these subjects who envisaged using Spanish for purposes of work/business may once more indicate a greater awareness of the language's international importance than existed at least among PG subjects who already knew Spanish (cp. 12.3.2). Table 225 shows when these subjects envisaged using Spanish: in the future rather than immediately.

TABLE 224 Circumstances in which subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Spanish envisaged using the language

	UG (43)	PG (31)
As tourist/with tourists	0.74	0.87
Reading/literature	0.16	0.36
Academic work/research	0.02	0.07
Work/business	0.35	0.32
Conversation at home or with relatives/friends	0.33	0.23
Cultural pursuits	----	0.07
Writing/correspondence	----	0.03
Generally	0.05	----
No response	0.07	0.07

TABLE 225 When did subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Spanish envisage using the language?

	UG (43)	PG (31)
Now	0.02	0.07
In the future	0.58	0.36
Now and in the future	0.30	0.36
No response	0.09	0.23

Chapter 13

Interest in learning Italian

13.1 ATTITUDES TO ITALIAN

13.1.1 Subjects who reported that they knew Italian (cf. Tables 157-160, 8.1.1)

As we saw in Chapter 5, 7.9% of UG subjects (19/240) and 15.5% of PG subjects (32/207) reported that they had learned Italian at some stage. Of the subjects who knew Italian, 14 UG (0.74) and 21 PG (0.66) said that they would like to know Italian better. These proportions are directly comparable with the corresponding ones for French and German and markedly higher than those for Irish and Spanish (cp. 9.1.1, 10.1.1, 11.1.1, 12.1.1).

13.1.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know Italian (cf. Tables 161 and 162, 8.1.2)

Of the subjects who did not know Italian, 16.3% of UG (36/221) and 18.9% of PG (33/175) said that they would like to know the language. As in the case of Spanish, these figures compare very unfavourably with those for German (cp. 11.1.2) and suggest that Italian culture does not bulk large on our subjects' horizons.

13.2 SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBJECTS WHO REPORTED THAT THEY KNEW ITALIAN BUT SAID THEY WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IT BETTER

13.2.1 Age at which learning had begun

TABLE 226 Ages at which (a) all subjects who knew Italian and (b) subjects who said they would like to know Italian better had begun learning the language

	All UG who knew Italian (19)	UG who said they would like to know Italian better (14)	All PG who knew Italian (32)	PG who said they would like to know Italian better (21)
Before 4 years	---	---	---	---
4-10 years	0.05	0.07	---	---
11-17 years	0.37	0.36	0.19	0.10
After 17 years	0.37	0.21	0.53	0.43
No response	0.21	0.43	0.28	0.48

Table 226 shows the ages at which subjects who knew Italian but said they would like to know it better had begun learning the language, compared with the ages at which all learners of Italian had begun learning the language; the high "no response" rate makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions. Table 226 provides a reminder that Italian was often learned after the age of 17, especially among PG.

13.2.2 Situations/circumstances in which Italian had been learned

Table 227 shows the situations/circumstances in which subjects who said they would like to know Italian better reported having learned the language, compared with the situations/circumstances in which all learners of Italian reported having learned the language. Friends/native speakers and books and literature/films/media/music were less prominent factors for both UG and PG who said they would like to know Italian better than for all learners of Italian. University or other courses were more frequently reported by PG than by UG in both categories, and in both cases less frequently reported by subjects who said they would like to know Italian better than by all learners of Italian. School was reported more frequently by UG than by PG in both categories, and in both cases less frequently by subjects who wanted to know Italian better than by all learners of Italian. Travel/living abroad was reported more often by PG than by UG in both categories, and less often by PG who wanted to know Italian better than by all PG learners of Italian.

TABLE 227 Situations/circumstances in which Italian was learned by (a) all learners of Italian and (b) subjects who said they would like to know Italian better

	All UG who knew Italian (19)	UG who said they would like to know Italian better (14)	All PG who knew Italian (32)	PG who said they would like to know Italian better (21)
Home environment	0.05	0.07	---	---
School	0.42	0.36	0.19	0.10
Friends/native speakers	0.26	0.14	0.31	0.19
University or other course	0.16	0.07	0.44	0.33
Travel/living abroad	0.21	0.21	0.38	0.29
Books and lit./ films/media/ music	0.26	0.21	0.25	0.19
No response	0.26	---	0.22	0.14

13.2.3 Italian as a medium of instruction (cf. Tables 27 and 28, 1.3.1; 6.3.1)

The two UG subjects who reported that they had experienced Italian as a medium of instruction at post-primary school said they would like to know Italian better.

13.2.4 Enjoyment (cf. Tables 40 and 41, 1.3.3)

0.75 UG (3/4) who had taken Italian at post-primary school and said they would like to know Italian better reported that Italian was the language they had most enjoyed learning at that level; the corresponding proportion for all UG who had taken Italian at post-primary school was 0.60 (3/5). Neither of the two PG who had taken Italian at post-primary school and said they would like to know the language better reported that Italian was the language he/she had most enjoyed learning at that level; the corresponding proportion for all PG who had taken Italian at post-primary school was 0.25 (1/4).

13.2.5 Examination success in Italian

Of UG who had taken Italian at post-primary school and said they would like to know the language better, 0.50 (2/4) reported that they had gained at least Grade C in Leaving Certificate or an equivalent examination in Italian. Of the two PG who had taken Italian at post-primary school and said they would like to know the language better, one (0.50) reported that he/she had gained at least Grade C in Leaving Certificate or an equivalent examination in Italian.

13.2.6 Visits to Italian-speaking territory

Of the subjects who knew Italian but said they would like to know it better, 0.50 UG (7/14) and 0.76 PG (16/21) reported that they had visited Italian-speaking territory. The corresponding proportions for all learners of Italian are somewhat higher: UG 0.53, PG 0.84 (cf. 6.2.3) Of the UG who wanted to know Italian better and had visited Italian-speaking territory, 0.14 (1/7) reported having stayed up to one week, 0.14 reported having stayed between two and four weeks, 0.57 (4/7) reported having stayed between two and three months, and 0.14 (1/7) reported having stayed more than three years. Of the PG in the same category 0.13 (2/16) reported having stayed up to one week, 0.44 (7/16) reported having stayed between two and four weeks, 0.19 (3/16) reported having stayed between two and three months, 0.13 (2/16) reported having stayed between four and six months, 0.06 (1/16) reported having stayed between one and two years.

Table 228 summarizes the communicative experience in Italian-speaking territory reported by subjects who had visited such territory and said they would like to know Italian better, compared with the communicative experience in Italian-speaking territory reported by all learners of Italian who had visited such territory. UG who said they would like to know Italian better reported on balance less exposure to Italian and a greater reliance on their own language than all UG learners of Italian who had visited Italian-speaking territory, whereas PG who said they would like to know Italian better reported rather less exposure to Italian but also rather less reliance on their own language than all PG learners of Italian who had visited Italian-speaking territory.

TABLE 228 Communicative experience in Italian-speaking territory of (a) all subjects who knew Italian and had visited such territory and (b) subjects who said they would like to know Italian better and had visited such territory

	All UG who knew Italian (10)	UG who said they would like to know Italian better (7)	All PG who knew Italian (26)	PG who said they would like to know Italian better (16)
Spoke Italian	0.60	0.57	0.31	0.25
Italian spoken to them	0.70	0.43	0.42	0.44
Italian spoken in their company	0.80	0.86	0.73	0.69
Spoke Italian and own language	0.20	0.29	0.50	0.44
Italian and own language spoken to them	0.20	0.57	0.31	0.31
Italian and own language spoken in their company	0.10	0.14	0.19	0.13

13.2.7 Subjects' assessment of their command of language skills in Italian (cf. 3.4.1)

As Table 229 shows, UG and PG who said they would like to know Italian better showed less confidence in claiming command of the language skills in Italian than all UG and PG learners of Italian. As regards the oral/aural skills, the discrepancy is much more pronounced between the PG than between the UG groups.

TABLE 229 Command of language skills in Italian claimed by (a) all subjects who knew Italian and (b) subjects who said they would like to know Italian better

	All UG who knew Italian (19)	UG who said they would like to know Italian better (14)	All PG who knew Italian (32)	PG who said they would like to know Italian better (21)
Understand speech	0.79	0.71	0.91	0.76
Speak	0.74	0.71	0.56	0.29
Read	0.84	0.64	0.91	0.71
Write	0.63	0.50	0.28	0.14

13.3 REASONS FOR WANTING TO KNOW ITALIAN BETTER/KNOW ITALIAN

13.3.1 Subjects who reported that they knew Italian but would like to know it better (cf. Tables 164 and 165, 8.2.2)

Table 230 shows the proportions of subjects who knew Italian but said they would like to know it better giving different reasons for wanting an improved knowledge of the language. As in the case of Spanish, the spread of reasons given collectively by PG in this category is twice as broad as the spread of reasons given collectively by UG. For both groups travel abroad/holidays was the most frequently mentioned reason. The next most frequently mentioned reason among UG was general conversation, whereas among PG two reasons held second place jointly - an interest in reading Italian literature and a desire to build on existing knowledge of the language.

TABLE 230 Proportions of subjects who knew Italian but said they would like to know it better reporting different reasons for wanting to improve their knowledge of the language

		UG (14)	PG (21)
1.0	Conversation generally	0.21	0.05
1.1	Travel abroad/holidays	0.36	0.48
1.2	Conferences/academic situations	---	---
1.3	Work/business	---	---
1.4	Social purposes	---	---
2.0	Practical value generally	---	---
2.1	Listen to radio/news media	---	0.10
2.2	Career purposes	---	0.05
2.3	General study purposes	---	0.19
3.0	Reading generally	0.14	0.05
3.1	Technical/academic	---	0.05
3.2	Literature	---	0.24
4.0	General interest	---	---
4.1	Self-improvement	0.07	0.05
4.2	Pleasure	---	---
4.3	For the sake of knowledge	0.07	---
4.4	Challenge of learning	---	---
5.0	Importance of the language generally	---	---
5.1	Within EEC/internationally	---	---
5.2	To gain access to other peoples/cultures	---	0.05
5.3	To understand other peoples/cultures	---	0.10
5.4	As part of one's cultural heritage	---	0.05
6.0	Special interests generally	---	---
6.1	Liking for the language	---	0.14
6.2	Liking for the sounds of the language	0.14	0.05
6.3	Have friends in country or who speak the language	---	0.05
6.4	Personal reasons	0.07	---
6.5	Cultural reasons	0.07	0.05
6.6	The language is easy to learn	0.14	0.10
6.7	Already have some knowledge of the language	---	0.24

13.3.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know but would like to know Italian (cf. Tables 166 and 167, 8.2.3)

Table 231 shows the percentages of subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Italian giving different reasons for wanting to know the language. Here, as in the case of subjects who did not know but said they would like to know

TABLE 231 Proportins of subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Italian reporting different reasons for wanting to know the language

		UG (36)	PG (33)
1.0	Conversation generally	0.22	----
1.1	Travel abroad/holidays	0.50	0.49
1.2	Conferences/academic situations	----	----
1.3	Work/business	0.08	----
1.4	Social purposes	----	----
2.0	Practical value generally	0.06	----
2.1	Listen to radio/news media	----	0.06
2.2	Career purposes	----	0.06
2.3	General study purposes	0.03	0.03
3.0	Reading generally	0.06	----
3.1	Technical/academic	0.03	0.03
3.2	Literature	0.14	0.12
4.0	General interest	----	0.06
4.1	Self-improvement	----	0.09
4.2	Pleasure	----	0.06
4.3	For the sake of knowledge	----	----
4.4	Challenge of learning	---	----
5.0	Importance of the language generally	----	----
5.1	Within EEC/internationally	0.11	0.06
5.2	To gain access to other peoples/cultures	---	0.03
5.3	To understand other peoples/cultures	----	0.18
5.4	As part of one's cultural heritage	----	----
6.0	Special interests generally	----	----
6.1	Liking for the language	0.08	----
6.2	Liking for the sounds of the language	0.03	----
6.3	Have friends in country or who speak the language	0.06	0.03
6.4	Personal reasons	----	----
6.5	Cultural reasons	0.06	0.21
6.6	The language is easy to learn	----	0.09
6.7	Already have some knowledge of the language	----	0.03

Spanish, roughly the same number of different reasons were mentioned collectively by the UG and PG groups. Again travel abroad/holidays is the dominant reason for both groups. Among UG it is followed by general conversation, an interest in reading Italian literature and the importance of Italian within the EEC/internationally; among PG it is followed by special cultural interests and an interest in cross-cultural understanding.

13.4 CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH SUBJECTS ENVISAGED USING ITALIAN (cf. Tables 168 and 169, 8.3)

13.4.1 Subjects who reported that they knew Italian but would like to know it better

Table 232 shows the circumstances in which subjects who knew Italian but said they would like to know it better envisaged using the language; the prominence of the first category in the table corresponds to the dominant reason subjects gave for wanting to know Italian better. Table 233 shows when they envisaged using the language: in the future rather than immediately.

TABLE 232 Circumstances in which subjects who knew Italian but said they would like to know it better envisaged using the language

	UG (14)	PG (21)
As tourist/with tourists	0.57	0.43
Reading/literature	0.14	0.24
Academic work/research	0.07	0.10
Work/business	0.36	0.10
Conversation at home or with relatives/friends	0.43	0.24
Cultural pursuits	---	0.10
No response	0.21	0.48

TABLE 233 When did subjects who knew Italian but said they would like to know it better envisage using the language?

	UG (14)	PG (21)
Now	---	0.10
In the future	0.43	0.24
Now and in the future	0.21	0.19
No response	0.36	0.48

13.4.2 Subjects who reported that they did not know but would like to know Italian

Table 234 shows the circumstances in which subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Italian envisaged using the language. The prominence of the first category in the table corresponds to the dominant reason these subjects gave for wanting to know Italian: travel abroad/ holidays and general conversation. It is worth noting that interest in reading Italian, including Italian literature, is much more marked among these subjects than among subjects who already knew Italian and said they would like to know it better. The same is true of using Italian for work/business purposes. Table 235 shows when these subjects envisaged using Italian: in the future rather than immediately.

TABLE 234 Circumstances in which subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Italian envisaged using the language

	UG (36)	PG (33)
As tourist/with tourist	0.78	0.85
Reading/literature	0.31	0.55
Academic work/research	0.06	0.12
Work/business	0.28	0.30
Conversation at home or with relatives/friends	0.36	0.27
Cultural pursuits	0.06	0.12
Writing/correspondence	---	0.06
Generally	0.06	---
No response	0.06	0.03

TABLE 235 When did subjects who did not know but said they would like to know Italian envisage using the language?

	UG (36)	PG (33)
Now	0.03	0.09
In the future	0.50	0.55
Now and in the future	0.28	0.30
No response	0.19	0.06

It is worth noting how much lower the "no response" rate is in Tables 234 and 235 compared with Tables 232 and 233: the same phenomenon was observed in 9.4, 10.4 and 11.4 and may indicate a higher level of interest among subjects who did not know the language than among subjects who did.

Chapter 14

Interest in learning languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian

Here as in Chapter 7 the numbers of subjects providing information is so small that except in one respect the data has anecdotal interest rather than representative significance. For this reason a more limited range of information is presented in this chapter than in Chapters 9-13.

It should be noted that throughout this chapter "Greek" embraces the classical and the modern language. No respondent distinguished between the two, but it seems likely that some replies referred to the modern rather than the classical language.

14.1 SUBJECTS' INTEREST IN "OTHER LANGUAGES" THEY ALREADY KNEW

Table 236 shows the percentages of subjects reporting that they would like to know better a language or languages that they already knew who specified a language other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish or Italian. In Table 237 the number of subjects who reported that they would like to know each specified "other" language better is expressed as a proportion of the total number of subjects who claimed a knowledge of that language. Tables 238 and 239 show the distribution of reasons given for wanting to know "other languages" better.

TABLE 236 Subjects reporting that they would like to know better a language they already knew apart from English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Percentages relate to the total numbers of subjects who reported that they would like to know better a language they already knew.

	UG (221)	PG (176)
Latin	2.7%	4.0%
Greek	2.7%	2.8%
Breton	---	1.1%
Scots Gaelic	---	0.6%
Welsh	0.9%	1.7%
Dutch	0.9%	1.7%
Portuguese	0.5%	1.7%
Danish	0.9%	0.6%
Finnish	---	0.6%
Icelandic	---	0.6%
Norwegian	---	1.1%
Swedish	---	1.1%
Lithuanian	---	0.6%
Russian	0.9%	6.8%
Arabic	0.5%	1.7%
Hebrew	0.5%	1.1%
Swahili	0.5%	---
Hindi	0.9%	---
Sanskrit	0.5%	---
Tamil	---	0.6%
Bahasa Malaysia	0.5%	---
Chinese	0.5%	0.6%

TABLE 237 Numbers of subjects reporting that they would like to know better languages they already knew apart from English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian, expressed as a proportion of all subjects reporting a knowledge of each language.

	UG		PG	
Latin	0.06	(6/104)	0.06	(7/118)
Greek	0.60	(6/10)	0.71	(5/7)
Breton	----		1.00	(2/2)
Scots Gaelic	----		0.20	(1/5)
Welsh	1.00	(2/2)	0.75	(3/4)
Dutch	0.33	(2/6)	0.50	(3/6)
Portuguese	1.00	(1/1)	1.00	(5/5)
Danish	0.67	(2/3)	1.00	(1/1)
Finnish	----		0.50	(1/2)
Icelandic	----		1.00	(1/1)
Norwegian	----		1.00	(2/2)
Swedish	----		1.00	(2/2)
Lithuanian	----		1.00	(1/1)
Russian	0.50	(2/4)	1.00	(12/12)
Arabic	1.00	(1/1)	0.38	(3/8)
Hebrew	0.50	(1/2)	1.00	(2/2)
Swahili	0.50	(1/2)	----	
Hindi	1.00	(2/2)	----	
Sanskrit	0.50	(1/2)	----	
Tamil	----		0.50	(1/2)
Bahasia Malaysia	1.00	(1/1)	----	
Chinese	0.33	(1/3)	0.50	(1/2)

TABLE 238 Distribution of reasons given by UG subjects for wanting to know better languages that they already knew other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Proportions refer to the total number of reasons given in respect of each language.

	No. of reasons given	1	2	3	4	5	6
Latin	4	----	----	0.75	0.25	----	----
Greek	5	0.60	----	0.40	----	----	----
Welsh	2	----	----	0.50	----	----	0.50
Dutch	1	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Portuguese	1	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Danish	3	0.67	----	----	----	----	0.33
Russian	3	----	----	0.33	0.33	0.33	----
Arabic	2	----	0.50	----	0.50	----	----
Hebrew	1	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Swahili	1	----	----	----	----	----	1.00
Hindi	2	----	----	----	----	0.50	0.50
Sanskrit	1	----	----	----	----	----	1.00
Bahasa Malaysia	1	----	----	----	----	1.00	----
Chinese	2	0.50	----	----	----	0.50	----

Key: 1 = Desire to use language for purposes of oral communication

2 = Practical value of language

3 = Reading

4 = General interest in the language

5 = International and/or cultural importance of the language

6 = Special/personal reasons

Note: Each of the above categories covers a bundle of reason-types, so that individual subjects may have given more than one reason in any particular category.

TABLE 239 Distribution of reasons given by PG subjects for wanting to know better languages that they already knew other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Proportions refer to the total number of reasons given in respect of each language.

	No. of reasons given	1	2	3	4	5	6
Latin	13	----	0.31	0.23	0.08	0.23	0.15
Greek	5	----	0.40	0.40	----	0.20	----
Breton	1	----	----	----	1.00	----	----
Scots Gaelic	4	0.25	0.25	----	0.25	0.25	----
Welsh	6	0.33	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	----
Dutch	4	0.25	0.25	----	----	----	0.50
Portuguese	6	----	----	0.17	----	----	0.83
Danish	4	----	0.25	----	0.25	0.50	----
Finnish	1	----	----	----	1.00	----	----
Icelandic	4	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	----	----
Norwegian	2	0.50	0.50	----	----	----	----
Swedish	2	----	----	0.50	0.50	----	----
Russian	22	0.18	0.09	0.18	0.05	0.09	0.41
Arabic	3	0.67	----	----	----	----	0.33
Hebrew	3	0.33	0.33	0.33	----	----	----
Tamil	1	----	----	----	----	1.00	----
Chinese	2	0.50	----	----	----	0.50	----

No reasons given in respect of Lithuanian

Key: 1 = Desire to use the language for oral communication

2 = Practical value of the language

3 = Reading

4 = General interest in the language

5 = International and/or cultural importance of the language

6 = Special/personal reasons

Note: Each of the above categories covers a bundle of reason-types, so that individual subjects may have given more than one reason in any particular category.

14.2 SUBJECTS' INTEREST IN "OTHER LANGUAGES" THEY DID NOT KNOW

Table 240 shows the percentages of subjects reporting that they would like to know languages that they did not know already other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. In Table 241 the numbers of subjects reporting a desire to know a language they did not already know other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian are expressed as percentages of the numbers of subjects who did not know each language. Tables 241 and 242 show the distribution of the reasons subjects gave for wanting to know languages other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. The data presented in Table 240 have representative rather than merely anecdotal significance since they refer to all our PG and UG subjects and not just to tiny sub-groups. These data show how few UG and PG subjects felt a need for a language other than those included in the second and third level curriculum. No doubt much of the interest expressed in the curriculum languages was generated by the cultural bias expressed by their presence in the curriculum in the first place.

TABLE 240 Subjects reporting that they would like to know a language that they did not know already who specified a language other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Percentages relate to total numbers of subjects who reported that they would like to know a language they did not know already.

	UG (194)	PG (155)
Latin	5.7%	2.6%
Greek	4.1%	9.0%
Breton	1.0%	0.7%
Scots Gaelic	1.0%	---
Welsh	2.6%	1.9%
Dutch	2.6%	3.2%
Portuguese	1.0%	4.5%
Danish	---	0.7%
Finnish	0.5%	0.7%
Icelandic	---	0.7%
Norwegian	1.6%	1.3%
Swedish	2.6%	4.5%
Polish	0.5%	---
Russian	19.1%	22.6%
Arabic	4.6%	4.5%
Hebrew	2.1%	5.8%
Afrikaans	---	0.7%
Swahili	0.5%	3.9%
Sanskrit	---	1.3%
Chinese	5.2%	13.6%
Japanese	1.0%	4.5%

TABLE 241 Numbers of subjects reporting a desire to know a language they did not already know other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian, expressed as percentages of total numbers of subjects who did not know each language.

	UG		PG	
Latin	8.1%	(11/136)	4.5%	(4/89)
Greek	3.5%	(8/230)	7.0%	(14/200)
Breton	0.8%	(2/240)	0.5%	(1/205)
Scots Gaelic	0.8%	(2/238)	---	
Welsh	2.1%	(5/238)	1.5%	(3/203)
Dutch	2.1%	(5/234)	2.5%	(5/201)
Portuguese	0.8%	(2/239)	3.4%	(7/204)
Danish	---		0.5%	(1/206)
Finnish	0.4%	(1/238)	0.5%	(1/205)
Icelandic	---		0.5%	(1/206)
Norwegian	1.3%	(3/240)	1.0%	(2/205)
Swedish	2.1%	(5/239)	3.4%	(7/205)
Polish	0.4%	(1/240)	---	
Russian	15.7%	(37/236)	18.0%	(35/195)
Arabic	3.8%	(9/239)	3.5%	(7/199)
Hebrew	1.7%	(4/238)	4.4%	(9/205)
Afrikaans	---		0.5%	(1/205)
Swahili	0.4%	(1/238)	2.9%	(6/206)
Sanskrit	---		1.0%	(2/206)
Chinese	4.2%	(10/237)	10.2%	(21/205)
Japanese	0.8%	(2/239)	3.4%	(7/206)

TABLE 242 Distribution of reasons given by UG subjects for wanting to know languages they did not know other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Proportions relate to the total number of reasons given in respect of each language.

	No. of reasons given	1	2	3	4	5	6
Latin	12	----	0.17	0.08	----	0.75	----
Greek	10	0.50	----	0.10	0.30	0.10	----
Breton	3	----	----	----	----	1.00	----
Scots Gaelic	4	0.25	----	----	----	0.75	----
Welsh	5	----	----	----	----	0.80	0.20
Dutch	5	0.20	----	----	----	----	0.80
Portuguese	2	----	----	----	----	----	1.00
Finnish	1	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Norwegian	4	0.50	----	----	0.25	0.25	----
Swedish	5	0.60	----	----	----	----	0.40
Polish	1	----	----	----	----	1.00	----
Russian	44	0.32	0.09	0.11	0.23	0.16	0.09
Arabic	10	0.30	----	----	0.40	----	0.30
Hebrew	4	0.25	0.25	0.25	----	----	0.25
Swahili	1	----	----	----	----	----	1.00
Chinese	14	0.21	----	0.07	0.21	0.36	0.14
Japanese	4	0.25	----	0.25	0.25	0.25	----

Key: 1 = Desire to use language for oral communication

2 = Practical value of the language

3 = Reading

4 = General interest in the language

5 = International and/or cultural importance of the language

6 = Special/personal reasons

Note: Each of the above categories covers a bundle of reason-types, so that individual subjects may have given more than one reason in any particular category.

TABLE 243 Distribution of reasons given by PG subjects for wanting to know languages they did not know other than English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Proportions relate to the total number of reasons given in respect of each language

	No. of reasons given	1	2	3	4	5	6
Latin	5	----	----	----	----	0.80	0.20
Greek	16	0.13	0.25	0.13	0.06	0.31	0.13
Breton	1	----	----	----	----	1.00	----
Welsh	4	----	----	----	----	0.75	0.25
Dutch	6	0.17	0.33	0.17	0.17	0.17	----
Portuguese	12	0.33	0.08	0.08	0.17	0.25	0.08
Danish	1	----	----	----	----	1.00	----
Finnish	1	----	----	----	1.00	----	----
Icelandic	2	0.50	----	----	----	0.50	----
Norwegian	3	0.33	----	----	----	0.33	0.33
Swedish	10	0.10	----	0.20	0.20	0.30	0.20
Russian	56	0.18	0.05	0.21	0.07	0.25	0.23
Arabic	11	0.27	----	0.09	0.18	0.46	----
Hebrew	9	----	----	0.56	0.11	----	0.33
Afrikaans	1	1.00	----	----	----	----	----
Swahili	8	0.50	----	----	0.25	0.25	----
Sanskrit	2	----	0.50	0.50	----	----	----
Chinese	29	0.14	0.07	0.10	0.17	0.38	0.14
Japanese	9	0.33	0.11	0.11	0.11	----	0.33

Key: 1 = Desire to use the language for oral communication

2 = Practical value of the language

3 = Reading

4 = General interest in the language

5 = International and/or cultural importance of the language

6 = Special/personal reasons

Note: Each of the above categories covers a bundle of reason-types, so that individual subjects may have given more than one reason in any particular category.

Conclusion

The surveys on which this report is based elicited a body of data on perceptions of language learning experience, problems and needs which is unique for Ireland and unusual anywhere as regards its range and level of detail. As we explained in the Introduction, our interpretation of the data does not seek to go beyond the description of broad trends, though as far as possible we have presented the data in such a way as to make further and more detailed analysis possible. At the same time, a number of general conclusions can be drawn.

From the data presented in Part I it is clear that formal educational/cultural factors were overwhelmingly dominant in subjects' experience of learning languages other than English, and that school was chief among these factors. As regards learning second languages at school, the data indicates a perceived imbalance in productive learning activities, written consistently outweighing oral activities at post-primary level and "mechanical" consistently outweighing "creative" activities at both primary and post-primary level. As regards language learning materials used at school, the data indicate a general, and at post-primary level entirely consistent, preponderance of textual over non-textual materials.

In general, subjects had a positive perception of language learning, over 70% of both populations reporting that they found it enjoyable; and on balance learning the individual living curriculum languages other than Irish and German emerged as an enjoyable rather than an unenjoyable experience.

As far as Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian are concerned, subjects generally claimed ability more frequently in the receptive than in the productive skills and perceived the productive skills as difficult more often than the receptive skills. The most difficult aspect of producing utterances in these languages was consistently reported as "finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation" (perhaps the item on the list which came closest to evoking the complexity of authentic language use).

Despite many inconsistencies in the data, on balance the perceived difficulty of using Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian seems to be diminished rather than increased by visiting a country/region where the language is in everyday use, by experiencing the language as a medium of instruction, and by experiencing a good variety of types of learning materials and activities for that language.

None of these findings is particularly surprising, with the possible exception of the finding in relation to how enjoyable subjects found language learning. In most cases our data provide empirical verification of what we would have intuited. For this reason the individual departures from the general trends take on a particular interest, and in areas where counter trends occur further study might be worthwhile in an attempt to establish whether our results were freak divergences or are replicable.

The data presented in Part II reveal that the majority of both populations had a positive attitude towards second languages. Particularly positive attitudes towards French, German and Italian emerged among those who already knew these three languages and towards French and German among those who did not already know French and German.

The perceived advantages of second language learning in general, the expressed reasons for wanting to know particular languages, and the envisaged circumstances of second language use tend to be of a general rather than a specific kind. For example, travel abroad was consistently more frequently mentioned than other advantages/reasons/circumstances. Advantages/reasons/circumstances specifically related to academic work were rarely mentioned; and PG showed a greater orientation towards study/research/self-improvement than UG. Expressed needs in relation to second languages contained more references to academic concerns, however; and again this orientation was more marked among PG than among UG. A need for aural/oral skills was more frequently expressed than a need for reading/writing.

An encouragingly high proportion of those subjects who reported a need for a language/languages other than their first language also expressed an intention to learn that language/those languages. Subjects expressed a wide range of preferences as regards teaching method, "explanation in a speech situation in which you can participate" emerging with relative prominence. Writing and oral repetition were prominent among preferred learning strategies. The preferred arrangement for language learning was "teacher + group + language laboratory". Clearly subjects regarded easy access to language courses as very important.

The overwhelming majority of subjects wanting to know second languages claimed that they would like to visit countries/regions where their target languages are in everyday use during their course of language learning and would like to meet native speakers of their target language(s), mostly at relatively early stages in the language learning process.

It is likely that the degree of positiveness with which subjects viewed second languages and language learning will come as a pleasant surprise to most language teachers, especially at second level. On the whole the findings of the report are good news for multi-media language courses taught in class with language laboratory back-up. But there are signs of resistance to self-instruction independent of class and teacher, which may point to the importance of a counselling structure to support self-instructional learners.

Appendix A

Survey of 382 students in Irish third-level institutions other than Trinity College, Dublin

This appendix presents the results of a supplementary survey conducted amongst the (undergraduate) student populations of twelve Irish third-level institutions other than Trinity College (for details see Introduction, 0.3). In order to facilitate cross-reference and comparison, these supplementary data are organized in a way which broadly matches the arrangement of the results of the main surveys in the body of the report.

A1 : LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

A1.1 NUMBERS

TABLE A1 Percentages of subjects reporting some knowledge of languages other than English. Cf. Tables 1, 141, 142.

	(N=382)
Irish	95.3%
French	88.5%
German	36.9%
Spanish	11.0%
Italian	3.4%
Latin	11.8%
Greek	0.3%
Welsh	0.3%
Dutch	0.8%
Portuguese	0.3%
Danish	0.3%
Swedish	0.3%
Russian	0.8%
Arabic	0.8%
Hebrew	0.3%
Maltese	0.5%
Afrikaans	0.3%
Dagaare	0.3%
Hausa	0.3%
Ibo	0.3%
Swahili	0.5%
Bengali	0.5%
Hindi	0.5%
Urdu	0.5%
Japanese	0.3%

A1.2 CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITUATIONS IN WHICH CONTACT WITH LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH WAS ESTABLISHED

A1.2.1 Home

TABLE A2 Percentages of subjects reporting a first language other than English. Cf. Tables 2 and 3, 1.2.1; Table 143, 7.2.1.

	(N=382)
English/Irish bilingual	1.3%
Irish	0.3%
French	0.3%
Spanish	0.3%
Maltese	0.3%
Dagaare	0.3%
Ibo	0.3%
Bengali	0.5%

TABLE A3 First language of subjects' mothers. Cf. Table 4, 1.2.1; also 7.2.1.

	(N=382)
English	93.5%
English/Irish bilingual	0.8%
Irish	2.9%
French	0.3%
German	0.3%
Dutch	0.3%
Maltese	0.3%
Dagaare	0.3%
Ibo	0.3%
Bengali	0.3%
No response	1.1%

TABLE A4 First language of subjects' fathers. Cf. Table 5, 1.2.1; also 7.2.1.

	(N=382)
English	94.2%
English/Irish bilingual	0.8%
Irish	3.7%
German	0.3%
Maltese	0.3%
Dagaare	0.3%
Ibo	0.3%
Bengali	0.3%

TABLE A5 First language of subjects' spouses/partners. Percentages refer to total number of subjects who reported that they were living with a spouse/partner. Cf. Table 6, 1.2.1; also 7.2.1.

	(102)
English	92.2%
English/Irish bilingual	1.0%
English/Afrikaans bilingual	1.0%
Irish	1.0%
French	2.0%
German	1.0%
Dutch	1.0%
Bengali	1.0%

TABLE A6 First language of subjects' children. Proportions refer to total number of subjects reporting that they had children. Cf. Table 7, 1.2.1; also 7.2.1.

	(13)
English	0.69
Irish	0.08
French	0.08
Spanish	0.08
Dagaare	0.08

TABLE A7 Languages spoken in subjects' households. Percentages refer to total number of subjects who reported that they lived in a household. Cf. Table 8, 1.2.1; also 7.2.1.

	(369)
English	93.2%
English/Irish bilingual	1.1%
English/German bilingual	0.3%
Irish	0.5%
Swahili	0.3%
No response	4.6%

A1.2.2 Age

TABLE A8 Ages at which subjects started learning the languages they knew. Percentages refer to total number of subjects reporting a knowledge of each language. Cf. Table 10, 1.2.2; Tables 144 and 145, 7.2.2.

	Before 4	4-10	11-17	After 17	No response
English (382)	96.9%	1.3%	0.3%	---	1.6%
Irish (364)	12.4%	55.5%	2.5%	---	29.7%
French (338)	0.9%	3.3%	58.9%	1.2%	35.8%
German (141)	---	2.1%	37.6%	57.4%	2.8%
Spanish (42)	2.4%	---	66.7%	2.4%	28.6%
Italian (13)	---	7.7%	23.1%	23.1%	46.2%
Latin (45)	---	2.2%	66.7%	---	31.1%
Dutch (3)	---	33.3%	---	---	66.7%
Portuguese (1)	---	---	100.0%	---	---
Danish (1)	---	---	---	100.0%	---
Swedish (1)	---	---	---	100.0%	---
Russian (3)	---	---	---	33.3%	66.7%
Arabic (3)	---	33.3%	---	33.3%	33.3%
Maltese (2)	50.0%	---	---	---	50.0%
Afrikaans (1)	---	---	100.0%	---	---
Hausa (1)	---	---	---	100.0%	---
Ibo (1)	100.0%	---	---	---	---
Swahili (2)	---	---	50.0%	---	50.0%
Bengali (2)	100.0%	---	---	---	---
Hindi (2)	---	---	100.0%	---	---
Urdu (2)	---	---	100.0%	---	---
Japanese (1)	---	---	---	100.0%	---

No data provided in respect of Greek, Welsh, Hebrew, Dagaare

A1.2.3 Speech community

TABLE A9 Where subjects learned the languages they knew. Percentages refer to total number of subjects reporting a knowledge of each language. Cf. Table 11, 1.2.3; Tables 146 and 147, 7.2.3.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
English (382)	83.8%	2.4%	0.5%	11.0%	0.5%	1.8%
Irish (364)	77.2%	2.5%	---	14.0%	0.3%	6.0%
French (338)	75.7%	3.0%	1.5%	13.0%	1.8%	5.0%
German (141)	61.7%	9.9%	5.0%	19.1%	1.4%	2.8%
Spanish (42)	52.4%	7.1%	11.9%	9.5%	---	19.0%
Italian (13)	53.8%	7.7%	7.7%	---	---	30.8%
Latin (45)	75.6%	---	2.2%	---	---	22.2%
Dutch (3)	---	33.3%	---	---	---	66.7%
Portuguese (1)	---	---	100.0%	---	---	---
Danish (1)	---	100.0%	---	---	---	---
Russian (3)	33.3%	---	---	---	---	66.7%
Arabic (3)	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	---	---	---
Hebrew (1)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Maltese (2)	---	---	---	50.0%	---	50.0%
Afrikaans (1)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Hausa (1)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Ibo (1)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Swahili (2)	---	50.0%	---	---	---	50.0%
Bengali (2)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Hindi (2)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Urdu (2)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Japanese (1)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---

No data provided in respect of Greek, Welsh, Swedish, Dagaare

Key:
1 = in own country
2 = in country/ region where language is native
3 = in other place
4 = in own country and in country/region where language is native
5 = other combinations
6 = no response

A1.2.4 Factors in the learning experience

TABLE A10 Factors that subjects reported played a role in their experience of learning languages other other than English. Percentages refer to total number of subjects reporting that they knew each language. Cf. Tables 20 and 21, 1.2.4; Tables 148 and 149, 7.2.4.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Irish (364)	16.2%	87.9%	8.8%	1.4%	4.9%	11.0%
French (338)	1.2%	93.2%	13.9%	1.8%	10.4%	22.2%
German (141)	2.8%	61.0%	18.4%	15.6%	21.3%	12.8%
Spanish (42)	4.8%	64.3%	7.1%	4.8%	2.4%	14.3%
Italian (13)	---	30.8%	23.1%	23.1%	7.7%	23.1%
Latin (45)	---	86.7%	---	2.2%	---	4.4%
Dutch (3)	---	---	---	---	33.3%	---
Portuguese (1)	---	100.0%	100.0%	---	---	100.0%
Danish (1)	---	---	---	100.0%	---	---
Swedish (1)	---	---	100.0%	---	---	---
Russian (3)	---	33.3%	33.3%	---	---	---
Arabic (3)	---	66.7%	---	---	---	---
Hebrew (1)	---	100.0%	---	---	---	---
Maltese (2)	50.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Afrikaans (1)	---	100.0%	100.0%	---	---	---
Hausa (1)	---	---	100.0%	---	---	---
Ibo (1)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Swahili (2)	---	---	50.0%	---	---	50.0%
Bengali (2)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Hindi (2)	---	---	100.0%	---	---	50.0%
Urdu (2)	---	---	100.0%	---	---	50.0%
Japanese (1)	---	---	100.0%	---	---	---

No data provided in respect of Greek, Welsh, Dagaare

Key:
1 = home environment
2 = school
3 = friends/acquaintances
4 = university/language course/study
5 = visits/residence abroad
6 = books, films, media, music

TABLE A11 Percentages of subjects who reported having taken different languages at primary school. Cf. Table 23, 1.2.4; Table 153, 7.2.4.

	(N=382)
English	98.4%
Irish	92.7%
French	10.7%
German	1.3%
Italian	0.5%
Latin	1.3%
Maltese	0.3%
Afrikaans	0.3%
Ibo	0.3%
Bengali	0.5%

TABLE A12 Percentages of subjects who reported having taken different languages at post-primary school. Cf. Table 24, 1.2.4; Table 154, 7.2.4.

	(N=382)
English	98.7%
Irish	90.3%
French	88.0%
German	13.6%
Spanish	10.7%
Italian	1.1%
Latin	11.0%
Portuguese	0.3%
Arabic	0.3%
Maltese	0.3%
Afrikaans	0.3%
Ibo	0.3%
Bengali	0.5%

A1.3 LEARNING IRISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH AND ITALIAN AT SCHOOL

A1.3.1 Activities and learning materials in the language classroom.

TABLE A13 Productive activities referred to by subjects in respect of learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish, and Italian at primary school. Percentages refer to total number of subjects who took each language at primary school. Cf. Table 29, 1.3.2.

	English (376)	Irish (354)	French (41)	German (5)	Spanish (0)	Italian (2)
Repeating individual sounds	59.3%	84.2%	95.1%	80.0%	---	100.0%
Repeating whole phrases/ sentences	69.1%	96.0%	95.1%	80.0%	---	100.0%
Oral grammar exercises	82.2%	91.2%	87.8%	80.0%	---	100.0%
Written grammar exercises	93.9%	97.2%	87.8%	80.0%	---	100.0%
Essays	94.4%	96.3%	53.7%	80.0%	---	50.0%
Translations	64.1%	81.4%	63.4%	60.0%	---	100.0%
Summaries	66.2%	55.1%	31.7%	60.0%	---	50.0%
Project work	60.1%	55.4%	12.2%	20.0%	---	50.0%
Free conversation	71.5%	65.3%	43.9%	80.0%	---	---
Debates	59.0%	32.2%	4.9%	---	---	---

TABLE A14 Productive activities referred to by subjects in relation to learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at post-primary school. Percentages refer to total number of subjects who took each language at post-primary school. Cf. Table 32, 1.3.2.

	English (377)	Irish (345)	French (336)	German (52)	Spanish (41)	Italian (4)
Repeating individual sounds	23.9%	59.4%	86.9%	71.2%	80.5%	100.0%
Repeating whole phrases/ sentences	31.0%	71.6%	90.8%	80.8%	85.4%	50.0%
Oral grammar exercises	51.5%	84.9%	85.4%	80.8%	82.9%	100.0%
Written grammar exercises	83.0%	95.4%	96.4%	84.6%	90.2%	100.0%
Essays	92.0%	98.6%	97.6%	88.5%	95.1%	75.0%
Translations	28.1%	87.2%	97.9%	88.5%	95.1%	100.0%
Summaries	76.9%	74.8%	68.8%	48.1%	56.1%	50.0%
Project work	49.1%	26.7%	17.9%	17.3%	14.6%	50.0%
Free conversation	64.7%	71.9%	59.8%	57.7%	53.7%	75.0%
Debates	72.4%	49.0%	14.6%	23.1%	12.2%	---

TABLE A15 Language learning materials referred to by subjects in relation to learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at primary school. Percentages refer to total number of subjects who took each language at primary school. Cf. Table 35, 1.3.2.

	English (376)	Irish (354)	French (41)	German (5)	Spanish (0)	Italian (2)
Textbooks	96.0%	71.2%	100.0%	100.0%	---	100.0%
Slides	16.8%	32.5%	46.3%	20.0%	---	---
Filmstrips	15.2%	26.3%	41.5%	60.0%	---	50.0%
Tapes/records of speech	20.2%	39.3%	73.2%	40.0%	---	50.0%
Tapes/records of songs	29.3%	37.0%	43.9%	40.0%	---	50.0%
Videotape recordings	4.0%	5.1%	17.0%	20.0%	---	50.0%
Extracts from newspapers/ magazines	55.3%	46.6%	34.1%	40.0%	---	---
Literary works	90.7%	85.3%	48.8%	80.0%	---	50.0%
Language lab	4.3%	2.8%	36.6%	60.0%	---	50.0%

TABLE A16 Language learning materials referred to by subjects in relation to learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at post-primary school. Percentages refer to total number of subjects who took each language at post-primary school. Cf. Table 37, 1.3.2.

	English (377)	Irish (345)	French (336)	German (52)	Spanish (41)	Italian (4)
Textbooks	95.2%	99.1%	100.0%	96.2%	97.6%	100.0%
Slides	12.5%	18.6%	49.1%	26.9%	39.0%	50.0%
Filmstrips	13.8%	11.0%	40.2%	17.3%	24.4%	50.0%
Tapes/records of speech	20.2%	35.7%	75.9%	42.3%	56.1%	75.0%
Tapes/records of songs	14.9%	27.5%	40.8%	34.6%	36.6%	25.0%
Videotape recordings	8.0%	5.8%	17.0%	5.8%	7.3%	25.0%
Extracts from newspapers/ magazines	64.7%	64.1%	67.3%	53.9%	51.2%	75.0%
Literary works	93.4%	68.1%	83.6%	57.7%	70.7%	100.0%
Language lab	4.2%	6.4%	23.8%	13.5%	19.5%	25.0%

A1.3.2 Enjoyment

TABLE A17 Subjects' expressed enjoyment of learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at primary school. Percentages refer to total number of subjects who had taken each language at primary school. Cf. Table 40, 1.3.3.

"Enjoyed most"

English (376)	57.9%
Irish (354)	23.2%
French (41)	29.3%
German (5)	---
Spanish (0)	---
Italian (2)	50.0%

"Enjoyed least"

English (376)	12.2%
Irish (354)	64.7%
French (41)	22.0%
German (5)	20.0%
Spanish (0)	---
Italian (2)	---

TABLE A18 Subjects' expressed enjoyment of learning English, Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian at post-primary school. Percentages refer to total number of subjects who took each language at post-primary school. Cf. Table 41, 1.3.3.

"Enjoyed most"

English (377)	36.1%
Irish (345)	15.9%
French (336)	41.7%
German (52)	26.9%
Spanish (41)	26.8%
Italian (4)	75.0%

"Enjoyed least"

English (377)	13.3%
Irish (345)	48.4%
French (336)	18.2%
German (52)	28.9%
Spanish (41)	19.5%
Italian (4)	---

A1.4 LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFICIENCY IN IRISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH AND ITALIAN

A1.4.1 The four skills

TABLE A19 Subjects' difficulty rating for the four skills in Irish, French, German, Spanish, Italian. Percentages relate to total number of subjects reporting that they knew each language. Cf. Tables 48-55, 1.4.1.

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	no response
IRISH (364)						
understand speech	10.7%	20.9%	33.8%	20.6%	8.5%	5.5%
speak	5.5%	25.0%	39.0%	18.1%	6.9%	5.5%
read	4.7%	17.9%	40.7%	22.0%	9.3%	5.5%
write	7.4%	25.6%	40.4%	22.0%	4.8%	---
FRENCH (338)						
understand speech	17.2%	37.3%	28.4%	12.4%	4.4%	0.3%
speak	14.8%	39.3%	32.5%	10.7%	2.4%	0.3%
read	5.6%	30.5%	43.2%	16.6%	3.8%	0.3%
write	8.6%	39.1%	39.9%	10.4%	1.8%	0.3%
GERMAN (141)						
understand speech	21.3%	27.0%	26.2%	15.6%	5.7%	4.3%
speak	18.4%	36.9%	29.1%	9.9%	5.7%	---
read	16.3%	38.3%	28.4%	9.9%	2.8%	4.3%
write	27.0%	40.4%	22.0%	3.5%	2.8%	4.3%
SPANISH (42)						
understand speech	16.7%	33.3%	31.0%	9.5%	---	9.5%
speak	9.5%	47.6%	23.8%	9.5%	---	9.5%
read	7.1%	26.2%	38.1%	14.3%	4.8%	9.5%
write	14.3%	35.7%	28.6%	9.5%	2.4%	9.5%
ITALIAN (13)						
understand speech	15.4%	23.1%	30.8%	7.7%	---	23.1%
speak	7.7%	46.2%	23.1%	---	---	23.1%
read	7.7%	30.8%	23.1%	15.4%	---	23.1%
write	7.7%	38.5%	15.4%	15.4%	---	23.1%

A1.4.2 Particular productive difficulties

TABLE A20 Subjects' difficulty rating for different aspects of producing Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Percentages relate to total number of subjects reporting that they knew each language. Cf. Tables 59-70, 1.4.2.

	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy	no response
IRISH (364)						
exact form	9.6%	27.5%	39.6%	14.6%	2.2%	6.6%
right word	5.8%	29.9%	40.7%	14.6%	2.7%	6.3%
word order	4.1%	16.2%	42.6%	23.9%	6.3%	6.9%
pronunciation	2.7%	11.0%	40.7%	28.8%	9.9%	6.9%
right turn of phrase	10.7%	41.2%	30.8%	8.5%	2.2%	6.6%
intonation	4.4%	25.3%	41.8%	15.9%	5.8%	6.9%
FRENCH (338)						
exact form	10.9%	39.3%	37.6%	8.9%	2.7%	0.6%
right word	7.7%	40.8%	41.4%	8.8%	0.6%	0.9%
word order	8.0%	31.1%	45.6%	12.7%	2.7%	---
pronunciation	9.2%	30.8%	38.2%	16.9%	4.7%	0.3%
right turn of phrase	18.0%	53.8%	23.4%	4.1%	0.6%	---
intonation	12.7%	41.4%	31.4%	11.2%	3.0%	0.3%
GERMAN (141)						
exact form	26.2%	41.1%	15.6%	7.1%	1.4%	8.5%
right word	20.6%	38.3%	24.8%	5.0%	2.1%	9.2%
word order	19.2%	34.8%	31.9%	7.1%	---	7.1%
pronunciation	8.5%	19.9%	44.0%	14.2%	5.0%	8.5%
right turn of phrase	22.7%	50.4%	15.6%	2.8%	---	8.5%
intonation	15.6%	36.2%	29.1%	12.8%	1.4%	5.0%
SPANISH (42)						
exact form	9.5%	26.2%	21.4%	19.1%	---	23.8%
right word	7.1%	33.3%	26.2%	9.5%	---	23.8%
word order	11.9%	28.6%	23.8%	11.9%	---	23.8%
pronunciation	2.4%	19.1%	19.1%	31.0%	2.4%	26.2%
right turn of phrase	9.5%	66.7%	19.1%	4.8%	---	---
intonation	7.1%	28.6%	33.3%	7.1%	---	23.8%
ITALIAN (13)						
exact form	---	23.1%	15.4%	15.4%	---	46.2%
right word	7.7%	7.7%	30.8%	7.7%	---	46.2%
word order	---	15.4%	38.5%	---	---	46.2%
pronunciation	---	15.4%	30.8%	7.7%	---	46.2%
right turn of phrase	15.4%	7.7%	30.8%	---	---	46.2%
intonation	7.7%	15.4%	23.1%	7.7%	---	46.2%

A2 : LANGUAGE NEEDS

A2.1 ATTITUDES TO SECOND LANGUAGES

A2.1.1 Subjects' attitudes to languages they already knew

TABLE A21 Question: Are there any languages that you know but would like to know better? Cf. 8.1.1.

	(N=382)
Yes	85.6%
No	14.4%

TABLE A22 Percentages of subjects who reported that they would like to know better a language/languages that they already knew specifying different languages. Cf. Table 157, 8.1.1; Table 236, 14.1.

	(327)
Irish	34.9%
French	71.6%
German	36.1%
Spanish	10.7%
Italian	4.0%
Latin	2.8%
Greek	0.3%
Welsh	0.3%
Dutch	0.9%
Danish	0.3%
Swedish	0.3%
Russian	0.9%
Arabic	0.6%
Maltese	0.6%
Hausa	0.3%
Swahili	0.6%
Japanese	0.3%

TABLE A23 Numbers of subjects reporting that they would like to know different languages better, expressed as percentages of all subjects reporting a knowledge of those languages. Cf. Table 158, 8.1.1; Table 237, 14.1.

Irish (364)	31.3%
French (338)	69.2%
German (141)	83.7%
Spanish (42)	83.3%
Italian (13)	100.0%
Latin (45)	20.0%
Greek (1)	100.0%
Welsh (1)	100.0%
Dutch (3)	100.0%
Danish (1)	100.0%
Swedish (1)	100.0%
Russian (3)	100.0%
Arabic (3)	66.7%
Maltese (2)	100.0%
Hausa (1)	100.0%
Swahili (2)	100.0%
Japanese (1)	100.0%

A2.1.2 Subjects' attitudes to languages they did not already know

TABLE A24 Question: Are there any languages you do not know but would like to know? Cf. 8.1.2.

	(N=382)
Yes	66.5%
No	33.5%

TABLE A25 Percentages of subjects who reported that they would like to know a language/languages that they did not know specifying different languages. Cf. Table 161, 8.1.2; Table 240, 14.2.

	(254)
Irish	1.2%
French	7.1%
German	51.6%
Spanish	34.7%
Italian	27.2%
Latin	3.2%
Greek	3.5%
Welsh	0.4%
Dutch	3.1%
Portuguese	0.8%
Danish	1.2%
Finnish	0.4%
Norwegian	0.4%
Swedish	1.6%
Russian	13.8%
Serbo-Croat	0.4%
Arabic	2.4%
Hebrew	0.4%
Hindi	0.8%
Sanskrit	0.4%
Bahasa Malaysia	0.4%
Chinese	5.1%
Japanese	2.8%

TABLE A26 Numbers of subjects reporting that they would like to know different languages that they did not already know, expressed as percentages of all subjects who did not report a knowledge of each language. Cf. Table 162, 8.1.2; Table 241, 14.2.

Irish (18)	16.7%
French (44)	40.9%
German (241)	54.4%
Spanish (340)	25.9%
Italian (369)	18.7%
Latin (337)	2.4%
Greek (381)	2.4%
Welsh (381)	0.3%
Dutch (379)	2.9%
Portuguese (381)	0.5%
Danish (381)	0.8%
Finnish (382)	0.3%
Norwegian (382)	0.3%
Swedish (381)	1.0%
Russian (379)	9.2%
Serbo-Croat (382)	0.3%
Arabic (379)	1.6%
Hebrew (381)	0.3%
Hindi (380)	0.5%
Sanskrit (382)	0.3%
Bahasa Malaysia (382)	0.8%
Chinese (382)	3.4%
Japanese (381)	1.8%

A2.2 SUBJECTS' REASONS FOR INTEREST IN SECOND LANGUAGES

A2.2.1 Subjects' perceptions of the advantages of second language learning

TABLE A27 Percentages of subjects specifying different advantages of knowing languages other than one's first language. Cf. Table 163, 8.2.1.

	(N=382)
Travel/tourism/work abroad	50.5%
Employment and business opportunities	33.5%
Academic work	5.2%
International communication	35.9%
Social advantages	24.1%
Self-development	24.1%
Cross-cultural understanding	28.0%
Increased awareness of own language and/or culture	3.7%
Access to foreign literature, cinema, theatre	5.8%
No response	9.7%

A2.2.2 Subjects' reasons for wanting to know better languages that they already knew

TABLE A28 Distribution of reasons given by subjects for wanting to know better languages that they already knew. Percentages refer to the total number of reasons given in respect of each language. Cf. Tables 164 and 165, 8.2.2; Tables 238 and 239, 14.1.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Irish (132)	12.1%	5.3%	3.8%	7.6%	45.5%	25.8%
French (339)	54.9%	6.5%	4.7%	9.7%	9.4%	14.8%
German (172)	64.0%	5.8%	8.7%	4.7%	5.8%	11.1%
Spanish (50)	42.0%	4.0%	2.0%	14.0%	4.0%	34.0%
Italian (16)	56.3%	6.3%	12.5%	6.3%	---	18.8%
Latin (11)	---	9.1%	27.3%	18.2%	9.1%	36.4%
Greek (1)	---	---	---	---	---	100.0%
Welsh (2)	50.0%	---	---	50.0%	---	---
Dutch (4)	75.0%	---	---	---	25.0%	---
Danish (1)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Swedish (2)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Russian (4)	75.0%	---	---	---	---	25.0%
Arabic (4)	50.0%	--	---	---	---	50.0%
Maltese (2)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Hausa (1)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Swahili (3)	33.3%	---	---	---	---	66.7%
Japanese (2)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---

Key: 1 = Desire to use language for purposes of oral communication
2 = Practical value of language
3 = Reading
4 = General interest in the language
5 = Cultural and/or international importance of the language
6 = Special/personal reasons

Note: Each of the above categories covers a bundle of reason-types, so that individual subjects may have given more than one reason in any particular category.

A2.2.3 Subjects' reasons for wanting to know languages they did not already know

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TABLE A29 Distribution of reasons given by subjects for wanting to know languages that they did not already know. Pecentages refer to the total number of reasons given in respect of each language. Cf. Tables 166 and 167, 8.2.3; Tables 242 and 243, 14.2.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Irish (3)	---	---	---	---	66.7%	33.3%
French (26)	34.6%	---	7.7%	3.9%	30.8%	23.1%
German (180)	61.1%	3.3%	3.9%	8.9%	11.7%	11.1%
Spanish (114)	52.6%	5.3%	6.1%	18.4%	10.5%	7.0%
Italian (106)	50.9%	5.7%	3.8%	15.1%	9.4%	15.1%
Latin (8)	---	37.5%	12.5%	25.0%	25.0%	---
Greek (3)	33.3%	---	---	66.7%	---	---
Welsh (1)	---	---	---	---	---	100.0%
Dutch (14)	64.3%	---	---	7.1%	14.3%	14.3%
Portuguese (2)	50.0%	---	---	---	---	50.0%
Danish (4)	75.0%	---	---	---	---	25.0%
Finnish (1)	---	---	---	---	---	100.0%
Norwegian (2)	50.0%	---	---	---	---	50.0%
Swedish (7)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Russian (38)	26.3%	---	10.5%	26.3%	10.5%	26.3%
Serbo-Croat (1)	---	---	---	---	100.0%	---
Arabic (7)	42.9%	---	---	14.3%	---	42.9%
Hebrew (1)	---	---	---	---	---	100.0%
Hindi (1)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Bahasa Malaysia (2)	100.0%	---	---	---	---	---
Chinese (16)	37.5%	---	---	18.8%	12.5%	31.3%
Japanese (10)	60.0%	---	10.0%	10.0%	20.0%	---

No data provided in respect of Sanskrit

Key:
1 = Desire to use the language for purposes of oral communication
2 = Practical value of the language
3 = Reading
4 = General interest in the language
5 = Cultural and/or international importance of the language
6 = Special/personal reasons

Note: Each of the above categories covers a bundle of reason-types, so that individual subjects may have given more than one reason in any particular category.

A2.3 EXPRESSED NEEDS FOR SECOND LANGUAGES (cf. 8.4)

TABLE A30 Question: Is there any reason why you must or feel you should learn or know languages other than your first language, or improve your knowledge of languages you already know? Cf. 8.4

	(N=382)
Yes	78.3%
No	21.7%

TABLE A31 Percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who gave different aspects of study as the reason for their need. Cf. Table 170, 8.4.

	(299)
General reasons	29.8%
Degree	20.7%
Literature	1.0%
Read textbooks	1.3%
Read journals, technical reports, papers	0.3%
Knowledge of foreign sources	4.0%
Research	---
Combination of the above	2.0%
Communication with other students	---

TABLE A32 Percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who gave different aspects of work/employment/career as the reason for their need. Cf. Table 171, 8.4.

	(299)
General reasons	32.1%
Teaching	4.0%
Career/research	31.4%
Communication with foreign colleagues	6.4%
Read/write documents, articles etc. in foreign language	---
Contact with foreign businessmen	3.3%
Translation	---
Combination of the above	0.3%

TABLE A33 Percentages of subjects reporting a need to know a language/languages other than their first language who gave different personal reasons for their need. Cf. Table 172, 8.4.

	(299)
General reasons	26.1%
Travel	13.0%
Holidays	6.4%
Communication with friends	14.1%
Pleasure/interest	4.4%
Enjoyment/fulfilment derived from knowing languages other than one's first	5.0%
Reading/literature	2.3%
Combination of the above	1.0%
Self-improvement	2.0%

A2.4 PROSPECTS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

TABLE A34 Question: Do you intend to take steps to fulfil your language needs? Percentages refer to total number of subjects who reported a need for a language/languages other than their first language. Cf. 8.5.

	(299)
Yes	92.3%
No	7.7%

TABLE A35 Question: When will you take steps to fulfil your language needs? Percentages refer to total number of subjects who reported a need for a language/languages other than their first language. Cf. Table 175, 8.5.

	(299)
1-4 months	15.1%
4-6 months	5.0%
7-9 months/next year	0.7%
1 year	10.7%
1-2 years	8.4%
3-5 years	5.0%
longer	0.3%
not definite/depends/as soon as possible	16.4%
studying now	18.7%
no response	19.7%

A2.5 APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE LEARNING (cf. 8.6)

A2.5.1 Preferred methods of teaching/learning

TABLE A36 Percentages of subjects expressing preference for different approaches to teaching. Cf. Table 176, 8.6.1.

	(N=382)
Explanation with drawings	22.3%
Oral explanation	36.9%
Written explanation	27.5%
Explanation in a speech situation you can observe	25.1%
Explanation in a speech situation in which you can participate	37.4%
No response	21.5%

TABLE A37 Percentages of subjects expressing preference for different methods of learning. Cf. Table 177, 8.6.1.

	(N=382)
Write it down	42.9%
Listen to it	40.3%
Read written explanation	24.1%
Repeat it aloud	30.6%
No response	20.9%

A2.5.2 Choice of course

TABLE A38 Percentages of subjects expressing preference for different arrangements for language learning. Cf. Table 178, 8.6.2.

	(N=382)
Teacher + group	34.6%
Teacher + individual	14.7%
Teacher + language laboratory + group	39.5%
Teacher + language laboratory + individual	16.2%
Self-instruction using books only	5.5%
Self-instruction using books + tapes/discs	23.0%
Radio course + book	5.0%
Television course + book	12.6%
No response	20.9%

Appendix B

The questionnaire

This appendix contains the final version of the questionnaire used in the survey, prefaced by the covering letter that was used in its postal administration to PG and UG students in Trinity College (the dates in the letter refer to the administration to PG students).

The general design of the questionnaire and its administration are discussed in the Introduction (0.2, 0.3). The first draft was piloted with a selection of members of the academic staff of Trinity College and subsequently with a group of undergraduate students at University College, Dublin. A number of revisions were then made to the questionnaire before it was administered to the Trinity College PG sample in Trinity term 1980. A few additional changes were made in the light of the results of this first phase of the survey, so that the form of the questionnaire used in Michaelmas term 1980 with the Trinity College UG sample (the one reproduced here) constituted a third draft. No further amendments to the questionnnaire were felt to be required before the third phase of the survey (1981), involving students at third-level institutions other than Trinity College.

The details of the evolution of the questionnaire are set out below. Throughout, numbers refer to the numbering of questions in the final version of the questionnaire.

Changes made after tne pilot study

- In general, more lines and grids were provided to facilitate responses; also there were some changes in spacing.
- In the introductory paragraph two phrases were underlined: "'first language' means the language you first learned as a child" and "include your first language".
- In questions 3-8 the sentence "Please list languages in descending order of proficiency" was added.
- In questions 12-22 the words referring to the type of educational institutions in question were underlined.
- Question 30 was constituted by combining what had previously been two separate questions, addressing respectively countries/regions visited and duration of visits; subsequent questions were renumbered accordingly.
- In Questions 34 and 35 the phrase "excluding your first language" was added.
- In Question 42 the phrase "e.g. as a tourist, at work, with friends" was added.

- Because of problems of overlap with questions 38, 41 and 42, two questions which had originally immediately followed question 53 were omitted: "Do you think languages other than your first language will be useful to you in your future life? YES/NO" and: "Why?"; subsequent questions were renumbered accordingly.

- In question 56 the phrase "under the following headings" was added.

Changes made after completion of the first phase of the survey

- Question 2, which had originally read "Is this still the language you speak best?" was divided into two parts: (a) "Have you native or near native competence in any language(s) other than your first language?" and (b) "If yes, please specify language(s)".

- In questions 67 and 68 the response categories were reduced and simplified from

  "_______ hours a day/week*
  _______ months/years*
  (*Delete where not applicable)"

  to "_______ hours per week"

The covering letter also underwent certain changes between the pilot study and the survey proper. Because the pilot study had elicited some unfavourable reactions to the length of the questionnaire and because we were keen that subjects should provide us with a maximum amount of information, two paragraphs were added to the letter; initially:

> We realize that the attached questionnaire may seem at first glance intimidating and something of an imposition. Nevertheless we hope that you will give some of your time to answering it; your response is vital to the future development of an important new facility in College.

and penultimately:

> We shall be most grateful if you will give some of your time to answering the questionnaire and return it to us by _______.

We also added to the last paragraph a note about arrangements for the return of completed questionnaires:

> We enclose a pre-paid envelope for your reply; if you prefer you may leave your completed questionnaire at the Centre for Language and Communication Studies office - Arts Building, Room 4091.

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

CENTRE FOR LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

ARTS BUILDING
TRINITY COLLEGE
DUBLIN 2

Tel. 772941 Ext. 1560

April 1980

RESEARCH PROJECT ON INDEPENDENT LANGUAGE LEARNING

LANGUAGE NEEDS SURVEY

We realize that the attached questionnaire may seem at first glance intimidating and something of an imposition. Nevertheless we hope that you will give some of your time to answering it; your response is vital to the future development of an important new facility in College.

Since its inception the Centre for Language and Communication Studies has offered all members of College the facility of learning a language by private study in the language laboratory.

In order to improve this facility, providing in due course a wider range of languages and learning materials specially designed for private study, we have recently launched a research project on independent (private study) language learning. This project is financed by the Development Fund.

The project has three aims:

(a) to establish what languages are needed for what purposes;

(b) to investigate the methodological problems raised by independent language learning;

(c) to assemble appropriate language learning materials.

This questionnaire relates to the first of these aims. We ask for your co-operation in establishing what language needs exist in College - at the moment we have no precise information.

We shall be most grateful if you will give some of your time to answering the questionnaire and return it to us by Friday 18 April.

You will note that the questionnaire does not ask for your name; anonymity is guaranteed. We enclose a pre-paid envelope for your reply; if you prefer you may leave your completed questionnaire at the Centre for Language and Communication Studies office - Arts Building, Room 4091.

David Little David Singleton Wilma Silvius

INSTRUCTIONS

Please fill in the form in pen, and answer the questions as precisely as possible. Be careful to turn every page.

Throughout the questionnaire "first language" means the language you first learned as a child. If you learned two or more languages simultaneously as a child, please indicate this in your answer to question 1. Unless otherwise specified "languages you know, can read, etc." include your first language.

A. The first part of this questionnaire is designed to give us an insight into your experience of language(s) to date.

1. What is your first language, that is, the language you first spoke as a child? ____________________

2 (a). Have you native or near native competence in any language(s) other than your first language? Yes/No*

2 (b). If yes, please specify language(s)
____
____
____

3. What language(s) would you understand if they were spoken to you by another person? Please list languages in descending order of proficiency.
____
____
____
____
____

4. What language(s) can you read? Please list languages in descending order of proficiency.
____
____
____
____
____

*Delete where not applicable

5. What kinds of things do you normally read in those languages? Please list languages in descending order of proficiency and tick boxes as appropriate.

LANGUAGE(S):					
books					
newspapers					
comics					
magazines					
'light' literature					
'serious' literature					
business letters					
personal letters					
academic articles					
conference papers					
poems					
telegrams					
other					

6. What language(s) can you write? Please list languages in descending order of proficiency.

7. What kinds of things do you normally write in those languages? Please list languages in descending order of proficiency and tick boxes as appropriate.

LANGUAGE(S):					
letters					
academic articles					
magazine/newspaper articles					
telegrams					
poems					
short stories					
books					
lecture notes					
messages					
other					

8. What language(s) can you speak ?
Please list languages in descending order
of proficiency.

____

____

____

____

9. When did you start to learn the language(s) you know, including your first language?

language	age

10. Where did you learn the language(s) you know? Please tick as appropriate, filling in the languages you know in the column under 'languages'.

LANGUAGE:	in my own Country	in the country where the language is native	in another place

11. How did you learn the languages you know? E.g. from parents, at school, from friends, through movies, music, etc. Please specify for all the languages you know all the ways applicable.

language	ways

12. Which language(s) did your teacher(s) in primary school use as a medium of instruction?

13. Which language(s) did your teacher(s) in post-primary school use as a medium of instruction?

14. Which language(s) did your teacher(s) in University/College use as a medium of instruction?

15. Which language(s) did you take in primary school?

16. For each language taken in primary school please specify the teaching materials used. Tick as many as appropriate.

LANGUAGE(S):			
textbooks			
slides			
filmstrips			
tapes/records of speech			
tapes/records of songs			
videotape recordings			
extracts from newspapers/magazines			
literary works (poems, short stories, etc.)			
language laboratory			

17. For each language taken in primary school, please specify the kinds of activities you had to perform. Tick as appropriate.

LANGUAGE(S):			
repeating individual sounds			
repeating whole phrases or sentences			
oral grammar exercises			
written grammar exercises			
essays			
translations			
summaries			
project-work			
free conversation			
debates			

18. Which language did you enjoy learning most in primary school? ______________________

19. Which language did you enjoy learning least in primary school? ______________________

20. Which language(s) did you take in post-primary school? ______________________

____

____

____

____

21. For each language taken in post-primary school please specify the teaching material used Fill in the language(s) and tick as appropriate.

LANGUAGE(S):						
textbooks						
slides						
filmstrips						
tapes/records of speech						
tapes/records of songs						
video-tape recordings						
extracts from newspapers/ magazines						
literary works (poems, short stories, etc.)						
language laboratory						

22. For each language taken in post-primary school, please specify the activities you had to perform. Fill in the languages and tick as appropriate.

LANGUAGE(S):						
repeating individual sounds						
repeating whole phrases or sentences						
oral grammar exercises						
essays						
translations						
summaries						
project-work						
free conversation						
debates						
written grammar exercises						

23. Which language did you enjoy learning most in post-primary school? ______________________

24. Which language did you enjoy learning least in post-primary school? ______________________

25. Please fill in the following box for each of your languages. How many years did you take the languages; did you take them in your final school exam; what was the examination, Honours or pass? What grades did you get?

LANGUAGE(S):	Final exam		Leaving Certificate Honours	Leaving Certificate Pass	A Levels	other (please specify)	number of years	Grade
	Yes	No						

26. Have you taken/are you taking a language course other than as a school or college subject? have taken/am taking/no*

27. If Yes, please give as much information as possible under the following headings.

- what language(s)?

- name of course(s)/institution(s)

- length of course(s)

- completion of course(s) Yes/No/Not completed yet*

*Delete where not applicable

- methods employed in the course(s). Please look closely at the possibilities listed below and state for each course you followed the corresponding number.

1. teacher and group
2. teacher and individual
3. teacher and language laboratory and group
4. teacher and language laboratory and individual
5. self-instruction using books only
6. self-instruction using books and records/tapes
7. radio course and book
8. television course and book

____

____

____

____

- general reaction to the course(s). (E.g. did you like it: were there certain parts you did not like?)

28. In languages other than your first have you ever

	Yes	No
- listened to speech for more than a few minutes?	___	___
- listened to radio programmes?	___	___
- watched films without subtitles?	___	___
- listened to songs?	___	___
- read newspapers/magazines?	___	___
- conversed with a foreigner in your own country	___	___
- sung songs?	___	___
- written to a pen-pal?	___	___
- watched television programmes?	___	___

Please tick as appropriate.

29. Have you ever been to a country/region where language(s) other than your first language is in general use? Yes/No*

If No, please continue with question 34 (page 11)

*Delete where not applicable

30. If Yes, to which countries/regions and for how long?

country/region	period

31. Which language did you speak? Please tick as appropriate.

COUNTRY/REGION(S):					
your first language					
language in general use					
other (specify)					

32. Which language did they speak to you? Please tick as appropriate.

COUNTRY/REGION(S):					
your first language					
language in general use					
other (specify)					

33. Which language did they speak among themselves when you were present? Please tick as appropriate.

COUNTRY/REGION(S):					
your first language					
language in general use					
other (specify)					

34. How difficult do you find it to read. write, speak and understand speech in the different languages you know excluding your first language. Please fill in a diagram for each language. Tick as appropriate.

LANGUAGE ___________	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
read					
write					
speak					
understand speech					

LANGUAGE ___________	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
read					
write					
speak					
understand speech					

LANGUAGE ___________	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
read					
write					
speak					
understand speech					

LANGUAGE ___________	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
read					
write					
speak					
understand speech					

LANGUAGE ___________	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
read					
write					
speak					
understand speech					

LANGUAGE ___________	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
read					
write					
speak					
understand speech					

35. How difficult do/did you find learning the different aspects of languages you know excluding your first language. Please fill in a diagram for every language
Tick as appropriate.

LANGUAGE ___________	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
getting the exact form right (word endings, etc.)					
finding the right word for a particular thing, idea, etc.					
getting the word order right					
pronouncing the words properly					
finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation					
getting the right intonation					

LANGUAGE ___________	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
getting the exact form right (word endings, etc.)					
finding the right word for a particular thing, idea, etc.					
getting the word order right					
pronouncing the words properly					
finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation					
getting the right intonation					

LANGUAGE ___________	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
getting the exact form right (word endings, etc.)					
finding the right word for a particular thing, idea, etc.					
getting the word order right					
pronouncing the words properly					
finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation					
getting the right intonation					

LANGUAGE __________	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
getting the exact form right (word endings, etc.)					
finding the right word for a particular thing, idea, etc.					
getting the word order right					
pronouncing the words properly					
finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation					
getting the right intonation					

LANGUAGE __________	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
getting the exact form right (word endings, etc.)					
finding the right word for a particular thing, idea, etc.					
getting the word order right					
pronouncing the words properly					
finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation					
getting the right intonation					

LANGUAGE __________	very hard	hard	normal	easy	very easy
getting the exact form right (word endings, etc.)					
finding the right word for a particular thing, idea, etc.					
getting the word order right					
pronouncing the words properly					
finding the right turn of phrase for exactly what you want to say in a particular situation					
getting the right intonation					

36. Are there any languages you know, but would like to know better? Yes/No*

37. If Yes, which language(s)?

38. Why do you want to know them better? Please specify for each language.

39. Are there any languages that you do not know, but would like to know? Yes/No*

40. If Yes, which language(s)?

41. Why do you want to know them? Please specify for each language

*Delete where not applicable

42. In what circumstances would you wish to use these languages? E.g. as a tourist, at work, with friends, to read books at home? Please specify for each language as precisely as possible.

43. When would you want to use these languages? Please fill in the language and tick as appropriate.

LANGUAGE: ____________________

now ___
in the future ___
both ___

LANGUAGE: ____________________

now ___
in the future ___
both ___

LANGUAGE: ____________________

now ___
in the future ___
both ___

LANGUAGE: ____________________

now ___
in the future ___
both ___

44. Which language do you find most musical/elegant/beautiful?

45. Which language do you find most unmusical/inelegant/ugly?

H. This part of the questionnaire deals with your attitude towards learning languages other than your first

46. How do you feel about understanding the people and culture of languages other than your first?

47. How well do the following statements reflect your attitudes towards learning languages other than your first? Please use the following number code:

1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = undecided; 4 = disagree; 5 = strongly disagree

	Code
- language learning is enjoyable	____
- new ways of saying things are interesting	____
- it is interesting to learn about how other people live	____
- following a language course is a worthwhile hobby	____
- I like trying to speak other languages, even if I make mistakes	____

48. Have you ever:

- asked for information about learning a language?	Yes/No*
- tried to read a manual on language learning?	Yes/No*
- discussed with a friend the possibility of language learning?	Yes/No*
- visited a language laboratory?	Yes/No*
- visited an institute where they give language courses?	Yes/No*

*Delete where not applicable

49. Please indicate the extent to which these statements reflect your feelings, by using the following number code:

1 = agree; 2 = uncertain; 3 = disagree

Code

- different people should have different ways of living and acting ____
- it's silly to learn a language when you already have a language of your own
- foreign ways and people are strange, different and unappealing ____
- there is more than one workable system for expressing ideas ____
- the foreign way of saying things just does not make sense ____
- you should not make fun of people who are different from yourself ____
- I like listening to other languages ____
- though the other languages may be hard for me, they probably are not hard for the native speakers ____
- my own first language is somehow better than all other languages ____
- I feel embarrassed about speaking other languages ____
- though differences in system make it difficult to acquire another language, these differences must be accepted as part of learning ____
- I suppose foreigners are all right, but I never liked them ____

50. What are the advantages in knowing languages other than your first language?

51. Do you see listening and speaking as more important than reading and writing in a language? Yes/No*

Do you see reading and writing as more important than listening and speaking in a language? Yes/No*

Do you think all skills have the same importance? Yes/No*

52. Suppose you met someone in the street who needed directions, but with whom you had no common language, which of the following things might you do? Tick as appropriate.

- try to understand what he/she was saying ____
- explain politely that you did not speak his/her language ____
- try to find someone who could understand him/her ____
- smile and walk away ____
- try to communicate through gestures, pictures, writing, street names, etc. ____

53. Do you think learning a language is enjoyable? Yes/No*

54. Why?

*Delete where not applicable

C. This part of the questionnaire relates to your possible need to learn languages

55. Is there any reason why you must, or feel you should learn or know language(s) other than your first, or improve your knowledge of those you already know? Yes/No*

If No, please continue at question 76 (section F)

56. If Yes, for what reasons do you need a language other than your first? Please specify the areas in your life in which the language(s) is/are needed under the following headings:

- study

- work

- private

57. What kind of language skills do you need? Please tick as appropriate.

- writing ___
- speaking ___
- reading ___
- understanding speech ___

58. Do you intend to take steps to fulfil your need? Yes/No*

59. If Yes, when will that be? Please state period from this date. ______________________

*Delete where not applicable

D. This part of the questionnaire is designed to discover how, on the basis of your experience to date, you would set about learning a language you needed

60. Which of the following kinds of courses would you choose?

- teacher and group ___
- teacher and individual ___
- teacher and language laboratory and group ___
- teacher and language laboratory and individual ___
- self-instruction using books only ___
- self-instruction using books and tapes/records ___
- radio course and book ___
- television course and book ___

61. Please explain your choice in 60.

62. In making your choice will you (Please tick as appropriate)

- consult a person who has experience of a particular type of course ___
- consult a person who has experience of language lerning? ___
- consult the publicity materials of teaching establishments? ___
- consult one teaching establishment? ___
- consult more than one teaching establishment? ___
- consult your lecturer/employer/superior? ___
- consult third parties (your parents, etc.)? ___
- consult the personnel department of an establishment where the language is to be used? ___
- consult no one ___

63. Would you like to go to the country/ region where the language is in general use? Yes/No*

64. If Yes, for how long? ____________________

65. Would you like to meet with or speak to native speakers of the language you want to learn? Yes/No*

66. At what stage of your study would you like

- to travel to the country where the language is in general use? ____________________
- to meet native speakers? ____________________

E. This part of the questionnaire is designed to elicit what opportunities you have to learn languages

67. How much time do you already give to language learning?

__________ hours per week

68. How much further time can you give to language learning?

__________ hours per week

*Delete where not applicable

69. Where is the course given that you do/could do? Please tick under F for the courses you are already following/have followed, and under W for the courses you will follow.

	F	W
- in the area where you are living	___	___
- in an area near where you are living	___	___
- in another place but in your own country	___	___
- in the country where the language is spoken	___	___

70. Where do you normally do your private study? Please tick as appropriate.

- in the College/institute, etc. ___
- at work ___
- near your place of work ___
- at home ___

71. What practical problems do you have to overcome before you can start studying a language? Please tick as appropriate.

- find a place to study ___
- find the money to study ___
- find the time ___
- find the right course ___
- none ___

72. Do you find it easier to learn something (Please tick as appropriate)

- when it is explained by drawings indicating what it means? ___
- when it is explained orally ___
- when it is written down ___
- when it occurs in a speech situation which you can observe ___
- when it occurs in a speech situation in which you are a participant ___

73. When you want to learn something, do you like to (Please tick as appropriate)

- write it down ___
- listen to it ___
- read a written explanation ___
- repeat it aloud ___

F. The following questions ask for information about yourself

74. What is your age? ______________

75. What is your sex? ______________

76. What is your occupation?

(a) exact title (lecturer, foreman, director, etc.) ______________

(b) type of work done ______________________________

77. Do you live -

(a) alone __________

(b) in a household/group __________

If in a household, what is the language in general use? ______________

78. Do you live together with a special partner/friend? Yes/No*

79. If Yes, what is the first language of the partner/friend? ______________

80. Have you any children? Yes/No*

81. If Yes, what is their first language? ______________

82. What is your nationality? ______________

83. What is your mother's occupation? (If mother deceased, pensioned, etc. please state her last occupation)

(a) exact title (lecturer, labourer, forewoman, director, etc.) ______________

(b) type of work done ______________________________

(c) does your mother own her own business or farm? Yes/No*

(d) if own business, how many employees?		if own farm, how many acres?	
none	___	under 5	___
1 - 5	___	5 - 14	___
6 - 10	___	15 - 29	___
11 - 20	___	30 - 49	___
21 - 50	___	50 - 100	___
over 50	___	100 - more	___

84. What is your father's occupation? (If father deceased, pensioned, etc. please state his last occupation)

(a) exact title (lecturer, labourer, foreman, director, etc.) ___________

(b) type of work done ___________

(c) does your father own his own business or farm? Yes/No*

(c) if own business, how many employees?		if own farm, how many acres?	
none	___	under 5	___
1 - 5	___	5 - 14	___
6 - 10	___	15 - 29	___
11 - 20	___	30 - 49	___
21 - 50	___	50 - 100	___
over 50	___	100 - more	___

85. Where was your mother born? ___________

86. Where was your father born? ___________

87. What is your mother's first language? ___________

88. What is your father's first language? ___________

89. Please state the number of years you spent in full-time education and your subjects at post-primary school and College.

Primary school ______ years

Post-priamry school ______ years

College/University ______ years

Name post-primary school ___________

Name College/University ___________

Subjects post-primary school:

1 ___________

2 ___________

3 ___________

4 ___________

5 ___________

6 ___________

7 ___________

8 ___________

9 ___________

10 ___________

Subjects in College/University

minor subjects ______________________

____

____

major subjects ______________________

____

90. What are your leisure-time pursuits?

91. Have you any plans to go abroad/emigrate? Yes/No*

*Delete where not applicable

G. This section is concerned with an evaluation of the questionnaire

Please answer as precisely as possible.

1. How much time did you spend answering the questions in this form? ________________

2. How did you find the questions? Easy/Hard*

3. Why did you find them easy/hard?

4. Did you find the questionnaire too long/rather long/not too long/normal length*

5. Did the questionnaire make sense to you? Yes/No*

6. Have you any other comments on the questionnaire?

7. Did this questionnaire

   (a) raise your interest in language learning ____
   (b) leave you indifferent towards language-learning ____
   (c) put you off completely ____

*Delete where not applicable

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